

History of Islam in German Thought

From Leibniz to Nietzsche

Ian Almond

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Introduction

The book in your hands is nothing more, nor less, than a history of the reception of the Muslim world in the works of eight key German thinkers. It begins with Leibniz's plan to invade Egypt (1671) and ends, a couple of hundred years later, with Nietzsche's praise of Islam in *The Antichrist* (1888). Although one of the points of a preface is to explain why the author took the path he did, and not to speculate on paths not chosen, I should confess at the outset that this is not quite the book I had started out to write.

My original plan, some eight years ago now, had been to write a history of the demonization of Islam in mainstream German thought—and how the threatening space of non-Europe was used to cement and solidify the pristine, rational, free *topos* of Europe. Provoked by the genius of Edward Said's multiple critiques of European hegemony (*Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism*), my intention was to move from thinker to thinker, and from epoch to epoch, carefully delineating the various stages in which Islam was reduced from Fiend to Footnote.

Very early on, however, two problems presented themselves. They were not insurmountable obstacles, but rather nagging doubts, persistent quibbles, which began to force the restructuring and rethinking of the whole project. The first concerned the truly bewildering variety of responses in one thinker to the faith and cultures of Islam, responses which were so zigzagging and contradictory in nature that I was forced to rethink not merely the book, but my entire concept of what an 'author' is. Whether it was a historian such as Herder, who could call Arabs a "savage people" one year and praise them as sublime poets the next, or a philosopher such as Marx, who could show genuine compassion for Algerians as victims of colonialism in one letter and (five days later) depict them as backward buffoons in another, it seemed clear any conventional notion of the author as a stable, autonomous entity was inadequate for the project. A keener, more sensitive awareness of the process of compartmentalization was necessary if the simultaneity of differing beliefs in the same thinker was to be addressed effectively. Instead of seeing thinkers as collections of reasonably coherent, gradually self-modifying beliefs and opinions, located around a

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consistent nexus or self, a very different understanding of the author came into being—the writer (be it philosopher, historian or poet) as a kind of space, in which different sub-identities and vocabularies (religious, political, professional) collided with one another and struggled to take control. No longer a static notion of the author as a repository of stable beliefs, then, but rather a more volatile idea of the writer as a constantly swirling flux of different forces—a flux, admittedly, with rhythms and patterns, but nevertheless a far more unpredictable entity than the orderly display cabinets some histories of ideas present us with. In some cases, as we shall see, these forces were capable of pulling a given writer in completely different directions. Insofar as I have tried to delineate these movements of friction and collision—and essentially map out the circulation of empathy and antipathy in these eight subjects—this history of Islam in German thought might also be called an anatomy of prejudice.

A second problem emerged in reading the eighteenth/nineteenth-century Orientalist sources thinkers such as Kant and Goethe employed. This part of the project had originally been intended to show where Kant's fanatical Arabs and Hegel's uncultured Turks came from—in other words, how an Orientalist tradition of defamation and misrepresentation concerning the Muslim world presented these thinkers with a skewed and demonized facade. Two points, however, quickly complicated this approach. The first was the significant number of scholars and historians in the German tradition (Reiske, von Diez, von Müller) who were both presciently aware of the dangers of interpreting other cultures, and were attempting to present a more sophisticated picture of the Muslim world. The extraordinary warning against cultural projection, given by the Leipzig Orientalist Jacob Reiske in 1757, is indicative: "What would we say to a Mohammedan, who without knowing our theology in its widest range, made a translation of the New Testament and poured his philosophical sludge all over it?"¹ Figures such as Heinrich von Diez (one of Goethe's most significant sources), who dedicated their energies to correcting European images of the Turk with volume after volume of translated Turkish writings, appeared to complicate the standard (post-Said) notion of the blindly Eurocentric Orientalist. The second point was not simply the existence of these Orientalists, but the extent to which writers such as Goethe or Hegel, while aware of the information they delivered, persistently chose to ignore it in their own treatment of Turks or Islam. Goethe was intimately familiar with anthologies of Ottoman poetry and thought, and yet could still portray Turks as bloodthirsty beasts; the newspaper Hegel edited for a year was filled with reports from the Ottoman world, and yet for Hegel Islam continued to be a faith which had disappeared from history; in the case of Schlegel, a life spent learning Persian and Arabic, absorbing countless books on Arabs and Muslim culture, did not prevent him from ultimately seeing the Muslim world as a Satanic phenomenon. Rather than seeing a prejudiced and biased Orientalist tradition which poisoned the innocent curiosity of the literary and

intellectual mainstream with its own store of images and clichés, what was emerging in my research was a continual process of ‘filtering’—whereby German intellectual elites sifted through a variety of Orientalia, taking the nuggets they needed but either overlooking or consciously rejecting anything which conflicted with their requirements. To some extent, the multiple selves of German authors appears to have gone hand in hand (as a cause or a consequence I have yet to decide) with this archival ‘filtering’ of the Muslim Orient.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: EUROPE AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE 1683–1856

This notion of a ‘filtered’ Orient is crucial, as it throws some light onto how major German thinkers were able to ignore almost completely the existence of a sophisticated and highly developed Muslim society on their very doorstep—namely, the eighteenth/nineteenth-century world of Ottoman society, with its hybrid mix of different languages (Turkish, Greek, Armenian) and faiths (Islam, Orthodox, Catholic, Judaism). As much of what we term ‘the Muslim world’ in this book will have to do with the Ottomans, it might be worthwhile to spend a moment providing some context for the unfamiliar reader.

The Ottoman Empire, stretching at its peak from North Africa to the upper reaches of Hungary and even so far eastwards as Persia, Yemen and the Crimea, was an empire Islamic in name and form, but containing within it an impressively syncretic collection of different cultures and faiths. Any anachronistic romanticizing of this multicultural hybridity should be avoided—the Ottomans could be as brutal on occasions as they were tolerant, and their treatment of non-Muslims or *zimmi* carried with it all the ambiguities (simultaneous protection and control) that the Hohenstaufen’s *servi camerae* had for Jews and Arabs. It is difficult, however, not to be struck by the number of senior figures—Pashas, ministers, ambassadors—in the Ottoman administration who were Greek, Armenian or Jewish. Synagogues and churches were left more or less to their own devices, as both Hegel and Goethe grudgingly observed, as long as the millions of Ottoman Christians who lived in the Empire behaved themselves politically (the Sultan’s tolerance and protection of Protestants in Ottoman Hungary was so conspicuous Melancthon even thought of visiting it to see for himself).² It was a tolerance which often attracted the eye of European observers critical of sectarian politics in their own countries; the idea that Christians should feel ashamed at the superior religious tolerance of their Turkish neighbours became a standard and familiar refrain—as one 1676 English pamphleteer put it, the Turk was “the Common Enemy” of Christians, and yet “to our endless shame, he lets Christians live under him with more ease and freedom than Christians do”.³

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In the German-speaking lands at that time, contact with and awareness of Ottoman culture was certainly greater than one might think. As the scholar Wilson points out, by 1764 (the year of Kant's *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*) an enormous Turkish embassy had established itself in Berlin, invited by Frederick the Great (Paris had received one as early as 1721).⁴ Provincial newspapers—such as the one Hegel edited, the *Bamberger Zeitung*—regularly carried remarkably detailed news and reports from “Konstantinopel” (the European name almost every German writer used in referring to Istanbul). Although it is hard to document, there was almost certainly some kind of resident Turkish population at the time in cities such as Berlin—the Prussian scholar Diez reports (in a letter to Goethe) regularly acting as an interpreter for visiting Ottoman merchants, and if we are to believe Engels, Turkish students were present at a lecture Schelling gave there in 1838—facts which suggest some kind of expatriate/immigrant population, however small.⁵ Although Marx is the only thinker in this book ever to have visited a Muslim country (and although he and Goethe are the only two ever to have actually come into contact with Muslims), it would be wrong to see the eighteenth/nineteenth-century German space as one wholly insulated from any contact with an Ottoman world beginning barely two hundred miles south of its borders.

By the time at which this book commences, the empire was starting to wane. The end of the 1683 Siege of Vienna (which had shocked Leibniz so severely) was a turning point in the fortunes of the Ottomans, whose dominion of the Balkans was gradually eaten away, land by land, river by river, until the Turks were driven back almost to the boundaries of modern-day Bulgaria. Although historians have debated endlessly over when the first signs of the end of the Ottoman Empire began, it does seem clear that from 1700 onwards, the Sultan no longer commanded the military respect and awe from European powers which Suleyman the Magnificent had enjoyed, two hundred years earlier. The Ottoman realms began to shrink, attacked by Russian Tsarist forces in the Crimea, the Balkans and the Caucases, as well as by the French in the Maghrib.

If anything unites the thinkers in this book, it is the fact that all of them—without exception—took an interest in these wars, both the various *Türkenkriege* (the last of which finished in 1792) as well as the numerous Russo-Turkish wars which ended in 1878. Leibniz wrote a number of essays on the subject, Herder constantly requested news of Russian victories over the Ottomans from his friend while travelling in France; Goethe was so enamoured of a series of paintings celebrating the Russian victory at Cesme (1770) that he wrote a twelve-page description of them, whilst Hegel scoured the newspapers every morning for news of events in Turkey. Marx was engrossed enough in the development of the Crimean War to run off to the library and read a couple of books about the Turks. What particularly concerned many German thinkers was the emergence of ‘the Eastern Question’, a nineteenth-century diplomatic term for an ongoing crisis: the state

of Christians (Greek Orthodox and Armenian) living under Ottoman rule, and what appeared to many to be the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire—an event which, at least from the perspective of Western Europe, provoked fears of a Russian occupation of the Middle East, turning Istanbul into a ‘Tsargrad’ and bringing the influence of Moscow and St. Petersburg to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Of course, apart from forces external to the Empire, the world of the Ottomans was also changing from within. Western influences—cultural and political as well as technological—were making their presence felt throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the so-called ‘Tulip period’ of European dress (1717–1730), the European-style palaces of Ahmed III (d. 1730), the gradual military reform of the army under Selim III (d. 1808) . . . the struggles taking place within the Ottoman capital between the modernizing reformists wanting a new order or *nizam-cedit* and the conservatives or ‘*ulema*’ (a struggle Hegel’s newspaper would follow quite avidly) indicates a situation of social and political turmoil every bit as complex and multifaceted as that of early nineteenth-century Europe. Whilst many German thinkers would read about and be aware of this complexity, it would fail to manifest itself in any meaningful way in their oeuvres.

Historians belong to history, and histories of ideas—like all histories—are written at finite points in time, by finite people, with finite aims. This book was written in the years between 2001 and 2008. Given the significant geo-political developments which have taken place during this time, it would be naive for me to deny their impact on this book—even though I have genuinely tried, as far as possible, to remove conjecture and projection from my approach to these eight thinkers, and simply to work with what I found, instead of what I wanted to find. My treatment of these thinkers, I hope, will be seen to be neither accusatory nor apologetic—for the analysis of complexity, and the unmasking of intricacy in ideology which it entails, is by no means a redemptive gesture. The attitude of the Nazis towards the Jews (their affairs, their fetishisms, their attempts to learn Hebrew) was hopelessly complex, but no one would suggest this complexity in any way exonerated them from the culpability of their hatred. This book attempts neither to judge, nor to defend, but merely to dissect. If anything, the awe I feel at the ability of the human mind to compartmentalize its feelings—how people can be moved to tears at the plight of suffering children in *The Kite Runner*, and yet still support the bombing of Afghanistan—has been the driving force behind the writing of this melancholy book.

1 Leibniz, Historicism and the Plague of Islam

Provided that something of importance is achieved, I am indifferent to whether it is done in Germany or France, for I seek the good of mankind. I am neither a phil-Hellene nor a philo-Roman but a philanthropos.

—letter to des Billettes, October 21, 1697¹

It is difficult to make the world believe that black is white, that in order to affirm public peace one has to take up arms which destroy it, and that for the good of Christianity one has to break all the sacred bonds of Christianity, even up to attacking a catholic monarch while he is on the point of delivering Europe from the plague of Mohammedanism [*la peste de mahometisme*].

—from “Reflexions sur la guerre” (1687—own trans.)²

In the history of Western responses to Islam, what is fascinating about Leibniz is that he exemplifies a certain ideological overlap, a peculiar transition period between a theological repudiation of Islam (Muslims as enemies of Christ) and an early Enlightenment rejection of the Mohammedan (Muslims as enemies of reason and civilization). Sometimes Leibniz’s Mohammedan is the *Erbfeind* or hereditary enemy/eternal foe, sometimes he is elevated to the status of mere barbarian, whilst on rare occasions he is even grudgingly acknowledged to be the possessor of a natural (though still errant) theology. This oscillation between these three responses to Islam constitutes a second, more limited point of continuity with Luther: that is to say, his schizophrenia. Although Leibniz’s responses to the Muslim take a different direction from that of Luther’s—a movement from theology to politics, from the chapel to the court, from Christendom to a place called ‘Europa’—Islam creates the same problems of coherence for Leibniz as it did for Luther. This similarity is one of structure, not of content. Luther’s schizophrenic attitude to Islam stemmed from a problematic indebtedness to the Turk as a divine sign of chastisement and correction. Leibniz’s multiple approaches to Islam, however, do not spring from the awkward implications of an apocalyptic/esoteric eschatology, but rather from a much more basic inability to reconcile the three separate (albeit porous) identities his work presents us with: Leibniz the political thinker, Leibniz the Christian apologist and Leibniz the early Enlightenment seeker of origins.³ The rest of this chapter will try to show how the agreements, tensions and conflicts

between these three identities are reflected in (at times, even initiated by) Leibniz's various remarks on Islam and Islamic cultures.

Certainly, there is a standard essay on Leibniz and Islam that one could write; it would involve a Saidesque compendium of the thinker's largely negative references to the faith and its followers, his dismissal of Turks as undeveloped, cruel and backward, his constant emphasis on Christian unity in the face of the Ottoman threat; in such an essay, the author of *Consilium Aegyptiacum* (the *Egyptian Plan*) would be foregrounded as an early, classical model for the modern intellectual of Empire. Leibniz's prescriptions for Louis XIV, his attempt to persuade the monarch that an attack on Egypt would be "to the profit of Christendom" (*pro profectu religionis Christianae*⁴), appear almost to have been written with Gramsci and Said's analysis of the intellectual's complicity with imperialistic hegemony in mind. Even by the early nineties, when both the Ottoman threat and Leibniz's own passion for an invasion of Egypt had faded, we can find enough remarks on infidels, "Mohammedan" fatalism and perverted fakirs to indicate at the very best a dismissive indifference, at the worst an abiding contempt on Leibniz's part towards the Muslim Orient. The ultimate point of such an approach, predictably enough, would be to underline precisely how *Christian* the limits of Leibniz's Christian humanism actually were—how Leibniz's allegedly universal concern for "the welfare of mankind"⁵, with regards to Islam at least, never really moved beyond Belgrade and Gibraltar.

Paradoxically, such an essay would be both necessary and superfluous. 'Superfluous' because, as Joseph McCarney has already pointed out in another, quite different context, the collective damning of figures such as Leibniz or Kant for their Islamophobia and race bias becomes quite meaningless in judging a vocabulary where terms such as 'Islamophobia' simply did not take place.⁶ At the same time, the association of Leibniz, and in particular Leibniz's impassioned Sinophilia, with words such as 'tolerance' and 'multiculturalism'—he has been called a propagator of "disinterested, objective and unselfish love" (Heer), the promoter of "an ethics of harmony" (Perkins), the father of "an ecumenical accord of truly global dimensions" (Clarke) and a man who "clearly did not harbour thoughts of political conquest or religious conversion" (Umberto Eco)⁷—does have to be modified in the light of Leibniz's Islam. However remarkable Leibniz's prescient interest in China may have been, the barbarous Mohammedans, lazy Turks and lascivious Egyptians we find in his *Opera omnia* do offer a sobering corrective to the more ambitious claims made for his inter-culturalism—reminding us of the significance, more than anything else, of exactly *when* and *how* Europeans chose to praise the Orient, and which portions of that Orient were elevated above the others when they did so.

Nevertheless, any such attempt to argue for an unambiguously negative representation of Islam in Leibniz's work finds itself complicated by three problematic counterpoints. The first of these is Leibniz's epistemological

subtlety—a sophisticated awareness of the extent to which human beings will modify information to suit their own political/doctrinal intentions. A single example will suffice: in 1697 the Englishman Thomas Burnet recommends to Leibniz one of the most notorious anti-Islamic tracts of the eighteenth century, Prideaux's defamatory biography of Mohammed, *The True Nature of Imposture*. He recommends it to Leibniz as being "very well-written" and "highly praised".⁸ Leibniz's reply, far from expressing any satisfaction that such a book has been written, is cold and discouraging: "In order to write a proper biography of Mahomet, author of the religion of the Saracens, it would be necessary to consult the Arabic manuscripts, otherwise one runs the risk of getting things wrong [*on court risque de se tromper*]".⁹ There is a critical will to truth here, one which is reflected in Leibniz's own frustrated search for a reliable translation of the Koran. Of course, this declared desire for objectivity should not be exaggerated—Luther too, we should remember, genuinely felt he was able to discern between the untruths which had been told about the Turk and his own 'real' facts. One of the arguments in this chapter, however, will be that a certain hunger for origins in Leibniz—whether it is for factual documents, racial *Ursprungen* or sound etymologies—will inadvertently undermine some of the religious/political hierarchies Leibniz makes use of elsewhere.

A second, related complication leads on from this: a certain polyphony in Leibniz, the range of voices, of linguistic registers that we find—the slightly pompous political commentator, the polite, deferring subject to his queen, the impassioned advocate, the informal scholar to his fellow academician, the effusive patriot and lover of the German language one minute, the sectarian-hating universalist and lover of mankind the next . . . this plethora of different voices makes it harder to gauge the weight and tone of Leibniz's remarks. At the very least, the discrepancy between the urge to holy war in the *Egyptian Plan* and the quieter, more respectful tone adopted towards Islam in the later correspondence does suggest a distinction between a Wartime Leibniz and a Peacetime Leibniz, between a public voice and a private one. Our attempt to understand Leibniz as three, interrelated identities instead of one will only partially address this deeper problem of how to examine an aggregate of philosophical texts as a meaningful whole.

The third complication involved in any straightforward expose of Leibniz as a conservative, Eurocentric, hegemonic, *Islamfeindlich* thinker does not involve Leibniz so much as the multiplicity of optics through which his approach to Islam can be evaluated. There are at least four different frames of reference within which Leibniz's rapprochement to—or perhaps *reifification* of—Islam can be assessed. Four historical contexts which, intellectually, colour and calibrate our own understanding of Leibniz's response to "Turcis et Tartaris". As these four alternative frameworks suggest different evaluations of Leibniz's own thoughts on Islam, it might be worthwhile to spend a moment briefly considering each one in turn.

The first context would be that of Leibniz's more illustrious contemporaries. Franklin Perkins, in his excellent *Leibniz and China*, sees Leibniz as "the only prominent modern philosopher to take a serious interest in Europe's contact with other cultures".¹⁰ Read against the background of Spinoza, Locke, Descartes and Hobbes, whose references to non-European cultures invariably took the form of anecdotal ammunition to support their own views, Leibniz emerges as the only significant philosopher of his period (with the possible exception of Montaigne) to actively research the languages, religious texts and ethnographies of other cultures. In this narrow sense at least, the attention Leibniz gives to Islam—his desire for a translation of the Koran using Muslim commentaries, his inquiries into the genealogy of Mohammed¹¹, his token attempts to understand the grammar and vocabulary of Persian, Arabic and Uzbek¹²—distinguishes him from his more inward-looking contemporaries, for whom the non-European was never really more than a source of useful marginalia.

Another possible context for evaluating Leibniz's response to Islam—and in particular, his depiction of the Turk—would be the variety of French travel accounts available in the time leading up to his arrival in Paris (1672). The reports of travellers such as Nicolas de Nicolay, Thevet, Busbecq, Belon and Postel had already established a mini-tradition of French writing about the Orient, a pool of texts Leibniz clearly made use of. In the *Iusta Dissertatio*, for instance, we find references to travellers such as Bartholomew Georgiewitz, the Hungarian pilgrim who spent thirteen years as a slave in Turkey, and achieved considerable fame with the publication of his experiences.¹³ Leibniz's conviction that the Turk obtained his bellicose ferocity through consuming an opiate herb called "Maslach", for example, probably came from Georgiewitz's account of this in his *La Maniere et ceremonies des Turcs*.¹⁴ Read against this background, what emerges most strikingly is how Leibniz's representation of the Turks as slovenly, inefficient and bestial goes against a general seventeenth-century admiration of Ottoman order, sobriety and military self-discipline. When one considers Postel's praise of the integrity and efficiency of Turkish officials, Gassot's description of the absence of pillaging in the Sultan's campaigns, and the general way in which Turkish sobriety and moderation was used by writers such as Busbecq to attack Western excesses,¹⁵ the sheer paucity of Leibniz's positive comments becomes more noticeable.

The expansion of Arab studies in Europe in the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century, particularly in England and the Netherlands (Oxford, Cambridge, Leiden) also provides another frame of reference for understanding Leibniz's own investigations into Islam. Although the Palatine library at Heidelberg had been a large source of Arabic manuscripts for Europe (and had produced one of Oxford's most prominent Arabists, Matthias Pasor), its ransacking during the Thirty Years' War only served to emphasize the German "dearth of texts and teachers of Arabic" up to 1650 (Toomer).¹⁶ Amongst the Oxford/Cambridge renaissance of Arabic studies in the

seventeenth century, the figure of Edward Pococke (1604–1691) emerges as an interesting precursor to Leibniz’s own historicism. Not simply because Pococke, like Leibniz, had cultivated what was a fairly common evangelical interest in Arabic as a means of converting Muslims—in 1660, Pococke had translated Grotius’s *De veritate religionis Christianae* into Arabic, and by 1674 had also provided translations of the Anglican catechism and liturgy.¹⁷ Pococke, like Leibniz, was particularly interested in Islamic history, in figures such as Ibn Khallikan (whose oeuvre Leibniz himself would seek out) and Ibn Tufayl. It is this respect for historical accuracy which led Pococke to correct the common misconceptions of Islam—the belief that *Muhajirun* is derived from the name of Hagar, for example, or the well-circulated Christian fiction of Mohammed’s iron coffin, suspended magically above the ground (a fable which Leibniz uncritically reiterates in the *New Essays*). The priest Ludovico Maracci, whose translation/refutation of the Koran Leibniz received in 1697, had quoted a large number of Arab authors second-hand from Pococke’s work.¹⁸ The philological fervour which Pococke showed in tracking down false etymologies and anecdotes of both Arab and non-Arab origin offers an interesting comment on Leibniz’s own excursion into the Orient.

A fourth and final context which offers a significant contrast to Leibniz’s own thoughts on Islam and the Turk is the seventeenth-century tradition of Protestant spirituality and millenarianism, one which gave a supernatural status to the Turk as a future ally of the true faith in the struggle against a Roman Antichrist. Böhme, Kuhlmann and Comenius were all key figures in this tradition, the latter two being near contemporaries of Leibniz and writers with whom Leibniz was definitely familiar.¹⁹ Comenius’s *Lux in tenebris* (1657) had prophetically envisaged the Turks (alongside the Swedes) as fundamental in bringing down the House of Habsburg—for which the Muslims would be rewarded with “the light of the Gospel” (*mercedisque loco reportaturos Evangelii lucem*).²⁰ In 1675, Kuhlmann even took a copy of Comenius’s tract to Istanbul to try and persuade Mehmet IV in person of the validity of his vision²¹—a visit Leibniz remained unimpressed with (in the *Nouveaux Essais*, he dismisses Kuhlmann’s trip “all the way to Constantinople” as the product of a “dangerous fantasy”²²). This is no place to inquire into how close Leibniz’s contact with such spiritualistic/Kabbalistic/Rosicrucian traditions was²³—on the surface, at least, it would appear that Leibniz was always skeptical towards such figures. In the *Nouveaux Essais* we see a general rejection of Comenius, Kuhlmann, Drabicius et al. as writers whose prophecies do more to “foment disturbances” than serve any useful purpose.²⁴ Despite the ambiguities in Leibniz’s overall disdainful attitude towards the Rosicrucian/alchemist/Millenarian tradition—his abiding interest in plants and minerals²⁵, his praise for Comenius’s encyclopaedia project, his parallel Lullian interest (at the same time as Kircher and Kuhlmann) in an artificial language, his reading of Kabbalists such as Van Helmont, not to mention Leibniz’s faintly Rosicrucian belief that the

wisdom inherent in the mystery of the numbers “came from the Orient to Greece”²⁶—Leibniz’s writings distinguish themselves in this context with their near complete vilification of the Turk. As a Protestant thinker with Catholic sympathies, Leibniz rejects all three of the available anti-Catholic responses to Islam in the seventeenth century—for Leibniz, the Turk is neither a sign of the end of the Age, nor a divine punishment, nor a possible ally in the final apocalyptic struggle with Rome.

LEIBNIZ THE POLITICAL THINKER: *EXULTA, GERMANIA!*

One approach to Islam and Muslims, amongst the many found in Leibniz, remains predominantly political. Although it has theological underpinnings, and although it will both found itself on and provide a foundation for research into the ‘Orient’, Islam is understood here as an essentially political entity. Its explicit synonymy with Ottoman power means that the Leibniz who used this version of Islam was the Leibniz of the court, the *Hof*, the diplomatic mission. A thinker who did not simply (as Russell said) “depend on the smiles of princes”,²⁷ but who represented the social/political institutions of his time as a genuine mouthpiece—the thinkers Gramsci called “experts in legitimation”.²⁸ This means that the Leibniz who used this voice, the Leibniz who was able to produce this very European first-person plural (“The Turks have already learnt *our* military arts and naval science . . .”²⁹) felt he was representing a *topos* of Christian political power, sometimes generically European, sometimes Franco-German-Austrian, sometimes exclusively Teutonic. What emerges, subsequently, is the diminution of the philosopher who considered heaven to be his country,³⁰ and an increase in emphasis upon the German thinker—the pen that could write a poem beginning “Exulta, Germania!” when Belgrade was finally taken back from the Turks.³¹

Leibniz’s own sense of Germanness is worth a few words, not just because Leibniz always emphasized how he was not “one of those impassioned patriots of one country alone”,³² but also because it appears to grow and recede in direct proportion to the Ottoman threat. Although Leibniz had always nurtured a sense of his native tongue’s intrinsic superiority—from his belief (1670) that it is the *Sprache* best suited to philosophy,³³ to his candidacy of German in the *Nouveaux Essais* as the closest tongue to the Adamic language³⁴—it is in 1683, the crucial year of the siege of Vienna, that we find the most explicit affirmation of his own patriotism in a tract entitled *An Encouragement to the Germans to Make Better Use of their Language and Intellect*.³⁵ The style of the tract is simple and direct: Leibniz praises how untouched Germany is by hurricanes and earthquakes (unlike “Asia and Southern Europe”³⁶); Germany may not have any oranges, but it doesn’t have any scorpions either—in any case, Leibniz adds, our own apples taste much sweeter than any India could send us. Mixed in with a

slightly trivial nationalism, however, is a more serious affirmation on Leibniz's part on what it means to belong to a nation. Beneath a shallow preference for homegrown vegetables and German linen, a much more earnest analysis of the naturalness and necessity of patriotism is offered:

Because everyone is a member of the collective body, we feel power and health and everything that goes with it, through a special ordinance of God. For how else can it come about, that there are few good-natured people who are not happy with their whole heart about their country and nation and, in particular, their higher authorities, or who would not immediately share their confidence when abroad with a fellow countryman? The bond of language, of customs, even of common names unites human beings in such a powerful, albeit invisible way and forms at once a kind of kinship. A letter, a newspaper which talks of our nation can make us ill or happy. (78; own trans.)

First of all, a nation for Leibniz is a phenomenon based primarily not on race or faith but language. In speaking of a Christian Europe, Leibniz will have to abandon this appeal to German names and customs but, in this essay at least, the linguistic bond appears to be privileged over those of blood or creed. As Leibniz, following Luther's recommendation of *Gott* as the best non-Hebrew term for God, attests in the same essay to the superior proximity of German to the original Hebrew ("I can't conceive of the Holy Scriptures sounding better in any other language in the world than they do in German"³⁷) then, by implication, the German people lie closer to the origins of Christianity than any other nation. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to see Leibniz resurrecting the old Holy Roman description of the Kaiser as "the worldly head of Christianity" (*das weltliche Haupt der Christenheit*).³⁸ An attack on the German-speaking lands, in this sense, would be an attack on the origins and centre of Christianity. Unconsciously, with no explicit aim in mind, Leibniz has moved Rome and Jerusalem to Hanover and Vienna.

Leibniz's prolific fluency in French—and Schleiermacher's remark that Leibniz could never have been the same philosopher if he had only written in German³⁹—supplies only a limited irony here. A frustration with Louis XIV's un-Christian collaboration with the Ottomans—combined with his anger at "those French fools who say that God is now chastising the emperor for having helped the Dutch heretics"⁴⁰—had severely tested the limits of Leibniz's already ambiguous Francophilia. The main aim of Leibniz's essay, however, is an urge to national awareness—the proposal for a German-orientated institution (*deutsch gesinnten Gesellschaft*) which would educate the "common man" (*gemeine Mann*) out of their desire for "animal drunkenness and card playing" (p. 84) and give them a better understanding of their war- and peacetime duties. Patriotism, for Leibniz, is an expression of intelligence, not a subjugation of it. In this national

becoming-aware of responsibility (the unpatriotic for Leibniz are literally “asleep” (*die Schlafenden*), a nation itself becomes more refined and *zivilisiert*. In an ironic anticipation of Nietzsche, Leibniz has little time for those “free spirits” who openly mock “the fear of God and the Fatherland” (p. 79). In many ways, *Ermahnung an die Deutschen* offers a perfect example of how culture, religion and language can be consolidated into a singular expression of nation. Leibniz’s un-Lutheran loyalty to *topos* over *logos*—to history over scripture—facilitates this extension of German awareness to civilization, happiness and spiritual well-being. The “free spirits” who make fun of this, adds Leibniz on an unusually anti-Semitic note, those *Freigeister* who see religion as a cage for the masses, deserve the same contempt as those who poison wells (p. 80).

Where does the Turk come into all of this? I have dwelt on Leibniz’s treatment of patriotism not merely to show how a lively and highly developed national consciousness is at work in his writings, nor even to demonstrate how, predictably enough, the Ottoman threat augmented Leibniz’s own sense of his cultural origins. The *Ermahnung an die Deutschen* is also interesting because the way it describes the unawakened *Pöbel* or rabble sounds exactly like the way Leibniz talks elsewhere about the Turks.

Most of Leibniz’s references to the Ottoman Turks, not surprisingly, are scattered throughout the 1680s, in response to the events of the Ottoman Balkan campaign. Three essays in particular—*Thoughts on the Unfortunate Retreat from Hungary* (1683), *Some Reflections on the Present War in Hungary* (1683) and *Thoughts On A Voluntary Turk-Tax* (1688)—allow some limited glimpses into what Leibniz thought of the “Mohammedan” culture which was now encamped on the banks of the Danube. It is difficult not to be struck by the distinctly plebeian description of the Turk in these essays—he writes of the invading army as the “Turkish rabble [*die Türkische Menge*], made up of incompetent, press-ganged and exhausted Asiatic peasants [*abgemattete Asiatische landvolck*]”.⁴¹ The lightning speed of the Ottomans’ arrival at the gates of Vienna shocks Leibniz—he says he can hardly believe the news; in writing of their presence, there is a tone of outrage and offense not merely related to surprise and physical alarm, but also the indignation of an aristocrat who sees an army of serfs march into his guest salon. As with Luther, there seems to be in Leibniz an implicit association of Islam and the Turk with the proletariat, and a repressed (though occasionally expressed) fear of social upheaval connected to their approach. The fear of Islam and the fear of the masses, not infrequently, lie inextricably together in this common alarm for an extant *Christian* social structure.

As Leibniz had already taken great pains a decade earlier to reassure Louis XIV that “despite their warrior pomp, there is no weaker army in the Orient” than the Ottomans (*nihil Orientibus . . . licet in pompam armatis, imbellius*—Marx would make the same mistake two hundred years later),⁴² we find the author of the *Egyptian Plan*, bereft of the Lutheran consolation

of a Hidden Hand, trying to understand ten years later how such Turkish success was possible:

I'll leave it to others to better understand whether the belief in an imaginary predestination, Maslak (aromatic Turkish wine) or opium makes the Turks so heartened, or much more that they are used to working harder and for less salary and, like all barbarians, are stronger in body than civilised peoples.⁴³

The enemies of God, no longer simply the enemies of Europe, have become the enemies of culture. The obvious point to make here is that for Leibniz, an attack on one of these abstracts is an attack on all three. And yet what is interesting about the Turkish pieces Leibniz wrote in the eighties is the relative paucity of religious references—only once in these essays, for example, does he refer to the Turk as the *Erbfeind* or eternal foe (“France should drive the *Erbfeind* into the water instead of tormenting Europe”⁴⁴). The Turkish assault on Vienna, for Leibniz, is more of an assault of appetite on spirit, of ignorance on consciousness, and ultimately (one suspects) of the rabble on the elite. Not so much *Erbfeind*, then, as *Kulturfeind*. Like Luther, Leibniz tries to find negative reasons for the Ottomans’ success, reasons which will confirm his already extant conception of the Turk: their fanaticism, their animal savagery, their sensual imbecility, their servitude to Oriental despotism. The possibility of a divine factor is left significantly out of the equation.

When Köprülü’s campaign begins to ebb after 1683, Leibniz’s confidence grows and he begins his characteristic association of the Turk with stupidity once more. The intellectual inferiority of Turks, of “Mohammedans” in general, appears to be a favourite motif of Leibniz—we encounter phrases such as *imbecillitate imperii Turcici*, “clumsy government” and “barbaric negligence”.⁴⁵ As late as 1697, we find Leibniz wondering why God supplies the Germans with miracles only against the Turks:

How is it, I ask you, that He only does [a miracle] against the Turks, and not against the French? Perhaps it is because the Turks are idiots [*sont des Sots*], and Heaven loves clever nations like the French.⁴⁶

The idiocy of the Turks: one has to wonder in what this idiocy consists. Do they reason slower? Are their brains less adapted to the rational? Do they find it harder to articulate abstract ideas? There are good reasons for thinking that if Leibniz deemed Turks—and “Mohammedans” in general—to be less intelligent than Europeans, it sprang from a perceived Turkish/Muslim inability to fully grasp all the dimensions of temporality. Just as the unenlightened peasant Leibniz wished to educate “thinks no further than they see” and deems all “histories to be the same as fairytales” (p. 84), Leibniz’s Muslims—he remarks on several occasions—find themselves equally

historically challenged, trapped in an idiot stupor by an epistemological incapacity to reflect upon the past:

The History of Antiquity is of absolute necessity for the proof of the truth of religion and, putting to one side the excellence of doctrine, it is by wholly divine origin that ours distinguishes itself from all others . . . and if the Mohammedans and the pagans . . . do not renounce [their beliefs], we can say it is principally the fault of their not knowing history.⁴⁷

Of course, Leibniz's denial of historical consciousness to Islam is only a small contribution to a long association of the Oriental with unreflectivity, one which will find its most spectacular expression in Hegel (the Oriental's indifference to history culminating in history's indifference to the Oriental). What is original in Leibniz—and most probably linked to his monadology—is how a “Mohammedan” inability to understand their origins is responsible for their present ignorance and error. Leibniz, author of the *Protogaea*, delver of both mines and etymologies, can forgive neither the Turk nor the peasant for their indifference towards the primordial. In a letter to Ludolf (1699) he mentions the eccentric Scandinavian philologist Rudbeck, who proposed his native Sweden to be the Lost Atlantis and the origin of Western civilization: “I do not doubt, however, that if Turkey and Tartary were given education [*si Turcis et Tartaris eruditio daretur*], from them would emerge a Hyperborea no less greater than the one Rudbeck referred to”.⁴⁸ The Turks, Leibniz insinuates, have enough pride (*fieri*) to produce a Rudbeck, but lack the historical consciousness. Islam, in many ways, comes across as an incomplete Monad; unaware of its origins (and by implication unable to decide its future), it lacks the introspective/maieutic level of inquiry which would bring out (un-forget) the truths Platonically buried in its history. Leibniz's fondness for the familiar motif of Mohammedan fatalism (*Fatum Mahumetanum*)—and the reports he gives of how Turkish travellers do not even bother trying to avoid places infested by the plague because of such fatalism⁴⁹—underlines this inadequacy of Islam to deal with time. Bereft of *arche* and *telos*, isolated from a past it doesn't inquire into and a future it doesn't care about, it lies adrift in a sea of Oriental passivity (the Muslim, Leibniz tells us, will not even jump out of the way of carts⁵⁰); the Turk, like the peasant, lives from day to day in the air lock of such unreflection.

In contrast to earlier texts such as the *Egyptian Plan*, the “Mohammedan” faith of the Turks hardly emerges as a characteristic in any of these remarks during the eighties. Apart from the occasional reference to predestination, the Islam of the Ottoman armies is largely transparent. For a series of texts written during the most crucial period in the possible Muslim domination of Europe, the result is a strangely secular analysis of the enemy—Leibniz's Turks, one almost feels, could quite easily be replaced by

Visigoths or barbarians with no great disturbance to the text, so little does the faith of Köprülü's soldiers impinge upon the general narrative. Perhaps this is not the place to move onto the complex topic of the facelessness of Leibniz's enemy; Gil Anidjar has already posited the question of the adversary as "a concrete, discursive, vanishing field",⁵¹ and Leibniz's Turks seem to share a similar ontological intangibility. Certainly if the Islamic identity of the Turks is elided in these treatises, the Christian identity of the Europe they are attacking enjoys rather more emphasis, in equal measures of optimism and pessimism. In *Thoughts on a Voluntary Turk-Tax* Leibniz speaks glowingly of the "beautiful, unhoped-for unification" of the "greatest part of European Christianity", whilst acknowledging some disappointment at "the coldheartedness of current Christendom, since they have the enemy at the door . . . and yet show no signs of stirring".⁵² In the 1683 satire *Mars Christianissimus*, we are told how important it is that "the people of Christendom have a leader against the infidels".⁵³ And yet it is one of Leibniz's earliest pieces, his *Consilium Aegyptiacum* or *Egyptian Plan* (written at the age of twenty-four) which best illustrates—and problematizes—the Christian underpinnings of Leibniz's political thought.

To some degree, the scholar D. J. Cook is correct in describing the *Egyptian Plan* as a "youthful outburst".⁵⁴ Despite the early date, however, this attempt to persuade France to attack Ottoman Egypt instead of her European neighbours is no piece of Leibnizian juvenilia, but a surprisingly well-prepared and meditated argument for an invasion of the Orient. Although Leibniz would never use again some of the more grotesque caricatures of Muslims (particularly Turks) in the *Egyptian Plan*, it remains an important text—not just because it establishes a trajectory for Leibniz's approach to Islam which neither his political theory nor his apologetics would ever really leave, but also because it suggests a rather cynical use of Christianity as a slightly superficial decoration, tacked on to an essentially strategic and thoroughly untranscendental project. The *Consilium Aegyptiacum* is a treatise which begins with a promise to Christianise the East, ends with the declaration that "never was God's honour and our own more narrowly intertwined", and spends large amounts of text in between describing naval facilities, army sizes, grain stores and trade routes.

The *Egyptian Plan* throws an interesting light on a number of points in Leibniz's attitude towards the Muslim Orient—and the Christian Europe he juxtaposed against it. Most obviously (as Perkins has already pointed out), it shows how even at an early age, Leibniz was actively engaged in the research of non-European cultures. Some fairly detailed (albeit exaggerated) descriptions of Ottoman intrigues, Middle Eastern geography and Arab resentment against their Turkish masters attest to an already extant familiarity on the young Leibniz's part with travel accounts and ambassadorial reports.⁵⁵ The conscious use of history in the *Plan* as a pragmatic tool of legitimization is also striking. "This project" Leibniz tells us, "has always been attractive to the greatest and wisest men as the sole means of

re-establishing [*restaurandum*] the interests of Christianity in the Orient".⁵⁶ The word *restaurandum* is interesting—Leibniz is careful to historically contextualize his proposal partly to be able to supply precedents such as Caesar and Alexander the Great, but more importantly to sell the *Plan* not as an invasion but a *restoration*. The Orient is originally Christian; if Luther's East was an alien realm where 'true' Christianity was impossible,⁵⁷ Leibniz's *Morgenland* is a place where Christianity is indigenous. Egypt will not be attacked so much as 'taken back'—the existence of Muslims in the Middle East has no place within Leibniz's exclusively Christian temporality except as unlawful and temporary occupiers. And yet if Time and History help Leibniz to transform Islam into the *toute autre* of Europe, they also serve to inscribe Islam into the *destiny* of Europe. In some sense anticipating Hegel's own relegation of Islam to an intermediate stage between paganism and Christianity, the conquest of Ottoman Egypt (described somewhat entomologically as a "nest" for the Saracens⁵⁸) and the subsequent "disappearance" of Mohammedanism will enable Europe to fully become what it is and proceed to a higher stage within its own Christian identity:

Egypt is the Holland of the Orient, as France is the China of the Orient . . .

[if France undertook this project] it could lead the way to expansion without limit, towards expansion on the scale of Alexander the Great; thus the Gospel would be carried to the most distant regions, with happiness filling the whole earth. The conquest of Egypt is easier than the conquest of Holland, that of the whole Orient more easy than Germany alone. The houses of Austria and France will be able to share the world. To one the Orient, to the other the Occident. Italy and Germany will be delivered from the fear of the Turks, and the Moors will no longer trouble the peninsula.⁵⁹

It is difficult to decide how much cynicism should be employed when witnessing these moments of overlap between Leibniz's Christian and political vocabularies. In Leibniz's desire to secure at the same time a spiritual and a 'worldly' good, one critic has discerned a mood of "Machiavellian *Realpolitik*" (Dascal).⁶⁰ Certainly the Leibniz who could tell Burnett how "the goal of the whole human race should be the knowledge and the development of the marvels of God" and, more importantly, that it was for precisely this reason that "God has given [the human race] the empire of this globe"⁶¹. . . such a Leibniz would see nothing problematic in the synonymy of faith and Empire. In an ontology which privileges activity over passivity,⁶² actuality over possibility, development over stasis, an ontology whose universe sees happiness as "a perpetual progress to new pleasures and new perfections"(p. 204), it is not difficult to imagine how Leibniz might see the expansion of culture to be the expansion of consciousness.

Any part the Muslim Orient played in this process of “expansion” would be purely ancillary. Where China, for example, would be able to offer a “commerce of light” with the West, an exchange of knowledge which “could give to us at once their work of thousands of years and render ours to them”,⁶³ neither the Turk nor the Arab have anything to teach us—their role is to be the recipient of European civilization, not an illuminating variant of it. Indeed, in some parts of the *Plan*, Leibniz seems to suggest the Orientals don’t have any religion at all⁶⁴—it will be necessary to wave a bag of booty to persuade the Arabs to join our side, for “it is foolish [*stultum*] to believe that these people are guided by religion”.⁶⁵ Leibniz’s consistent dehumanizing of the Turk/Arab—turning them into a rabble of Asiatic peasants, a swarm of insects proceeding from a common nest—underlines the conscious refusal of the political Leibniz to consider any kinship or analogy whatsoever with the Muslim Other.

When the much-vaunted status of Leibniz as a non-sectarian philosopher of peace and reconciliation is considered, then it becomes easier to see how Islam, in many ways, would pay the price for such Christian unity. The abiding Otherness of Islam, in short, both sprang from and sustained Leibniz’s ecumenicalism. The annihilation of any possible relationship and future coexistence with the Muslim world—drawing on any example from a range of historical precedents, from Frederick II’s pact with the Saracens to Protestant hopes of an alliance with the Turk—was both the condition and consequence of Leibniz’s hope in “the great work of reunion”⁶⁶ he envisaged for Christianity. As far as the author of the *Egyptian Plan* and the “Turk-Tax” was concerned, the faith Leibniz once referred to as “the monster of Islam” possessed no redeeming features.⁶⁷

LEIBNIZ THE CHRISTIAN THINKER: ISLAM AS NATURAL THEOLOGY

infidelis est qui Christi fidem respuit (quales judaei, Mahumetani, pagani).

—*Defintionum Juris Specimen*⁶⁸

I heartily commend you, sir, for maintaining that faith is grounded in reason; otherwise, why would we prefer the Bible to the Koran or the ancient writings of the Brahmins?

—*New Essays*, p. 494

We saw in the previous section how every time Leibniz encountered the faith and followers of Islam and its cultures in a political context, the Muslim Other was either demonized or, at the very best, transformed into a qualityless, adversarial abstract—a faceless Turk. We also saw how mutually

porous Leibniz's political and religious identities were—how easily the enemies of the Habsburgs could become the enemies of Christ, how explicitly a plan to conquer and control the physical resources of a Muslim country colluded with a plan to convert it. Wherever Leibniz's political pen writes of religion, this essential link between faith and terrain—between *fides* and *terra*—is consistently crucial.

For all the interrelatedness of Leibniz's political and religious vocabularies, however, there are approaches to Islam within Leibniz which see Muslims not as animals or savages or political enemies, but primarily as misguided human beings with similar moral/theological frameworks who, for some reason or another, have rejected the truth of Christianity. When Leibniz writes this way, his understanding of Islam as a corrupted, yet on many points still valid, version of Christianity comes to the fore, rather than any demonic picture of Islam as a plague, monster or Eternal Foe. For the political Leibniz—the author of the *Egyptian Plan* and advocate of the *Turckensteuer*—the “Mohammedan” is unconvertible in the most Lutheran sense of the word; he can only be conquered, never converted. For Leibniz the Christian apologist—the Jesuit correspondent, the author of the *Theodicy*—the project of finding a way to evangelically disseminate the rational truthfulness of Christianity was of abiding significance. Muslims, as well as the Chinese and the Jews, were naturally included in this project.

Leibniz's lifelong desire to construct an artificial language is of crucial significance here. It is surprising how many scholars, in their appraisal of Leibniz's dream of “a language or universal characteristic by which all concepts and things can be put into beautiful order”,⁶⁹ fail to mention the medieval Christian author who inspired the project, the thirteenth-century proselytizer to the Muslims, Raymond Lull. Certainly, Eco's description of Leibniz as a thinker who “did not harbor thoughts of political conquest or religious conversion” makes no mention of him. This may be partly because Leibniz's evaluation of Lull was as critical as it was laudatory, and partly because of the low opinion he had of the “Lullian” treatise he himself had written as a teenager—the 1666 *Art of Combinations*, a work he describes as “a little schoolboyish essay” written after the “Lullian Art”.⁷⁰ Lull's life was dedicated to the conversion of non-Christians—in particular, of the Jewish and Muslim populations on his native Majorca—and his *Ars Magna* (1305), a mathematical attempt to prove the validity of the Christian God through a succession of Kabbalistic, geometrical spheres, tables and propositions, was a strong influence on the early Leibniz. A brief excerpt from the Prologue to his *Book of the Gentile* will give an idea of the spirit of his project:

Since for a long time we have had dealings with unbelievers [Jews and Muslims] and have heard their false opinions and errors, and in order that they may give praise to Our Lord God . . . I . . . wish to exert myself to the utmost in finding a new method and new reasons by which

those in error might be shown the path to glory without end and avoid infinite suffering.

Every science requires words by which it can best be presented, and this demonstrative science needs obscure words unfamiliar to laymen, but since we are writing this book for laymen, we will have to discuss this science briefly and in plain words.⁷¹

Peter Fenves, in a remarkable essay on Leibniz and philosophical style, has already highlighted the relationship between Leibniz's privileging of clarity over truth and the quest for an origin: "As a *logica verbalis*, philosophical style disambiguates discourse".⁷² Almost four centuries earlier, we find Lull in the same quest for clarity—driven by the same concern for the transparency of Truth, exhibiting the same frustration at the inadequacy of the current tools available to him (the need for a "new method" and "new reasons" to convert the looming Saracens). Leibniz's avoidance of special terminology ("Technical terms are to be shunned as worse than a dog or snake"⁷³) finds its precedent in Lull's desire for "plain words"—in both cases, given the evangelical projects of the two men, the price of ambiguity would be the eternal soul; the reward of clarity the promise of salvation. Both the *Ars Magna* and Leibniz's own "General Characteristic" illustrate how the semiotic project to construct a language of perfect clarity has its origins not in a desire to seek truth, but to disseminate it—not to comprehend, but to convert. Leibniz, writing in 1679, is explicit on this point:

anyone who is certainly convinced of the truth of religion and its consequences, and so embraces others in love that he desires the conversion of mankind, will surely admit, if he understands these matters, that nothing will be more influential than this discovery for the propagation of the faith, unless it be miracles, the holiness of an apostle or the victories of a great monarch. Where this language can once be introduced by missionaries, the true religion, which is in complete agreement with reason, would be established.⁷⁴

Leibniz's desire to construct a universal language, when seen as a direct descendant of Lull's search for a new method or argument which would convert the Saracens, is ultimately motivated by Islam. To say 'exclusively motivated' would be in error—Leibniz saw the defense of Christianity as a war on a number of Socinian/freethinking fronts, not least of all against "the shipwreck of atheism which now threatens us".⁷⁵ When one considers, however, Leibniz's advocacy of his new language as an *Ersatz* for military campaigns (as good as "the victories of a great monarch") in the propagation of the Christian faith—an evangelical device, moreover, indebted in no small part to medieval Christendom's most renowned anti-Islamic apologist, it is difficult not to see Islam, in the form of the encroaching pressure

of the Turks, as playing a significant part in Leibniz's plan for a universal character.

One consequence of this need for Christian clarity is that it pushes the Muslim/Turk/Arab into the realm of confusion, muddle and unclarity. If the Christian is required to provide a transparent language so that the latent truthfulness of his faith may emerge, then Islam is an effect of the obfuscation of such a message. Not surprisingly, the "childish errors of the Koran" render the Muslim faith a poor photocopy of the Christian original.⁷⁶ This natural tendency of Leibniz's Muslim to confuse and pollute truth is not confined to religion; the "spring-water" of Greek medicine, we will recall, "was muddled in the Arab rivulets, and has had many impurities removed by recourse to the Greek originals".⁷⁷ Likewise the followers of Averroes are considered to have given sound Neoplatonic ideas "a bad turn of meaning".⁷⁸ Leibniz's conviction of the natural clarity of German facilitates the ease with which a Christian Europe can command a superior access to truth—spiritually, intellectually, linguistically—over their muddled, origin-blind, Oriental counterparts. In his preface to Nizolius, Leibniz is happy to report how "even the Turks use German names for metals in the mines of . . . Asia Minor" in preference to their own.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, this belief that Christians/Europeans have a clearer, uncorrupted view of truth than their Muslim/Arab opposites will be undermined, as we shall see, by Leibniz's own obsession with the *arche*.

Leibniz's desire for a new language, it should also be said, runs in almost exactly the opposite direction to Luther's. Luther's constant association of Muslims with rationalists and philosophers—which accounted, in Luther's opinion, for their rejection of Christ's divinity—was undoubtedly one of the factors motivating him to seek a new language "outside" philosophy, a *nova lingua* which would be able to express the occasionally non-rational complexities of faith (such as "The Word became flesh"⁸⁰). If Leibniz projected a language which would rationally clarify Christianity (which is "completely in agreement with reason"), Luther sought one which would be able to express the non-rational in Christianity (that a mother, for example, may also be a virgin). Leibniz's obsession with *claritas*, in this sense, reflected a desire to convert the Turk; Luther's anti-philosophical language of faith, on the other hand, was a language designed to keep the Moor outside—a hermetic vocabulary only true believers would share.

Leibniz's conception of Islam as possessing a natural theology offers us a slightly milder aspect of his relationship to the faith. It would be wrong to exaggerate this; Leibniz's understanding of the expansion of Islam could be quite cynical, and there are a number of stages in its development. The young author of the *Egyptian Plan* allows no credit at all to any semblance of natural religion in his description of "Mohammedan" conversion in North Africa, choosing rather to blame the indigenous Christianity there ("if the Nubians . . . have lost their faith, it is due more to the faults of their pastors than any love of Mahomet"⁸¹). This reluctance to acknowledge

anything remotely good about Islam—and the consequent decision to attribute its successes to the deficiencies of the Catholic/Orthodox church rather than any redeeming doctrine of Mohammed's—continues well into the 1690s. In a letter to Bossuet, we find Leibniz lamenting how the early church's prohibition of images was overturned by the second Council of Nicaea—if the abuse of image-worship had been checked early on, remarks Leibniz, "Christianity would not have become reproachable [*meprisable*] in the Orient, and Mohammed would never have prevailed".⁸² This idea of Islam and Judaism retaining something primordially spiritual about them, some form of purer doctrine from which post-Nicaean Christianity had sadly departed, will manifest itself again, as we shall see in the next section. The main point to make here is that Leibniz's approach to the possibility of a natural theology in Islam is still rather negative; two years later, in a letter to Madame de Brinon, Leibniz informs her how the "wholly sensuous" devotion of Roman Catholicism has resulted in abuses which, in turn, "have contributed a great deal to frightening away many Mohammedans from Christianity".⁸³ For Leibniz the emphasis lies more on the unnaturalness of contemporary (invariably Catholic) Christianity, rather than the naturalness of the religion of Islam. Any praise there is for Islam's natural theology is relative, implicit and tainted with a certain cynicism:

it is an ineradicable custom to relate all things to one single, intelligent and spiritual Principle—it is from this which Mahomet has profited, and Mohammedanism has been the graveyard of idolatry in many countries.⁸⁴

Islam's resemblance to Christianity, Leibniz suggests, is something Islam has 'profited' from. In all of these remarks, it is easy to detect a certain avoidance of the basic similarities Islam and Christianity share. Leibniz feels he has to mention these but, in order to render such resemblances less problematic, tries to place them in a framework (Mohammed the cynical imposter and manipulator of rabbles) which will actually turn them to his advantage. In this way the awkward problem of Mohammed's similarities with Christian core beliefs—the mistrust of images, the immortality of the soul, a single God—either end up reinforcing the image of Mohammed as one who 'profits' from truth or, even better, serve to strengthen Leibniz's own attempts to reform Christianity from within ('Even the Turk doesn't do X', 'Even Mohammedans believe in Y', etc). One could almost write a mini-history of this 'even', this *etiam*, this *même* . . . beginning, no doubt, with James's assertion that "Even the devil believes in one God" (James 2:19), this reference to an enemy's good practice or belief in order to provoke and correct the complacency of one's own. Nevertheless, by the time we reach the *Theodicy* (1710), Leibniz's approach is generally more positive, although the clause-inducing 'even' still persists:

Even Mahomet in time did not stray from these important teachings of natural theology: rather, his followers have spread them even more to the farthest-flung peoples of Asia and Africa, where Christianity had neither penetrated, nor had a chance to spread; and in many lands they have done away with pagan superstitions, which was in contradiction with the true teaching of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul.⁸⁵

The political enemy has become the spiritual ally; the Eternal Foe, the plague, the “monster” of Islam, now actually does the work of Christianity. Islam’s similarities, no longer proof of Mohammed’s cunning, now attest rather to the universality of certain key beliefs. A selective gaze, now bereft of any agonistic edge, has taken the extant resemblances to Christianity within Islam and converted them from a rival faith’s advantageous features into the basis for a sustained belief in universal moral truths. In a sense, this foreshadows what we are going to argue next—that as Leibniz becomes more and more interested in the question of origins, Islam’s resemblance to Christianity ceases to be resented, as it acquires a use-value in Leibniz’s bigger project. Again, this should not be exaggerated—although Leibniz concedes that “Mohammedans” practise a natural theology, there is never the sense (as with China) that such a natural theology is better at producing “public morality” than the European version.⁸⁶ Perkins has already shown in some detail how, for Leibniz, “both Europe and China have a natural theology—that of Europe is more developed and articulate, while that of China is more effective in producing good behaviour”.⁸⁷ This idea of an exchange—we teach the Chinese the Christian faith, they teach us how to lead better public lives—will never be applied to the Islamic Orient. Although Leibniz’s generally low opinion of the Muslim never again reaches the levels of debauchery found in the *Egyptian Plan*—where the Ottoman Empire, we will recall, is submerged in crimes of Sodomy and rampant polygamy (*Hinc infandum Sodomiae crimen, et in media polygamia contemptus sexus muliebris*)⁸⁸—even as late as 1705, we still find tales (taken from Locke) of Egyptian fakirs who are considered holy because they sleep with mules, and not women or boys.⁸⁹ If Leibniz felt that Europeans were to improve their morality by learning from the East (as Perkins argues), such lessons would come from a far higher Orient than any Islam could provide.

LEIBNIZ THE SEEKER OF CAUSES: THE ENEMY BECOMES THE ORIGIN

It is good to study the discoveries of others in such a way that allows us to detect the source of their inventions and to make them in some sense our own. And I wish authors would give us the history of their discoveries and the process by which they arrive at them.⁹⁰

History, Leibniz once remarked, is the mother of observation.⁹¹ In three quests—Leibniz’s search for a reliable translation of the Koran, his linguistic investigations into the first ‘Adamic’ language and the related ethnological inquiry into what he called “the origin of nations”⁹²—historicism emerges as a determining vocabulary, one which overrides any religious or political considerations. Of course, Leibniz still remains a Christian thinker; the very fact that his request for samples of different languages from dozens of philologists took the form of a *pater noster* (so that “every tongue may praise His name”⁹³) warns us against the naivete of separating a “scientific” Leibniz from the theological thinker. Moreover, Leibniz’s occasional and inconsistent conviction that German was the most natural of *Natursprachen* also points to a nationalistic bias in his research.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the strangely respectful tone adopted towards Islam—not to mention Turks and Arabs—within Leibniz’s philological research, in contrast with the generally derogatory remarks he employs elsewhere in his political and religious writings, does suggest a fundamental change of identity. For this version of Leibniz, at least, the enemy becomes the origin, the adversary becomes the ancestor; Islam, along with its languages and cultures, moves from a place of political enmity and theological disdain to a new position of tacit philological acceptance.

A number of factors facilitated this move. The most obvious of these would be the evaporation of the Ottoman threat after 1683—the gradual withdrawal of a “Mohammedan” empire not merely from the gates of Vienna, but even right back down to the boundaries of modern Bulgaria. By 1691, Leibniz is well aware that the “Turks are trying to save the rest of their Empire in Europe” and that a victory at Timisoara would frighten the Ottomans in Adrianopolis.⁹⁵ One could argue, in a somewhat Foucauldian manner, that once the Turk had withdrawn physically, a lacuna was left which could only be filled philologically. Once the Turkish armies of the Ottomans were no longer there to represent the threatening contemporaneity of Islam, the retreating Muslim could be reinscribed into an Oriental past, less real, more remote, the subject of scholarship, not strategists.

Whatever one might think of such historical methodology, the fact remains that Leibniz’s political and philological remarks concerning Turks do not overlap. The brief treatise *Consultation sur les affaires generales* (1691) is the last time Leibniz talks with any degree of seriousness about the Turkish military threat; a letter to Landgraf Ernst in July 1692 marks the first significant manifestation of Leibniz’s interest in the Turks as an ethnic/linguistic group, rather than a political power. After 1692, apart from the occasional reference to the Porte and their peace with the Tsar, Leibniz’s fervent inquiries into Arabic, Persian and Turkish—not to mention the Turk’s possible kinship with Kalmucks and Scythians—effectively sideline any interest in the Turk as a political contemporary. For Leibniz, the genealogy of Mohammed and the identity of Ibn Khallikan become

more important than the Sultan's intent in Transylvania or the size of his Balkan army.

Leibniz's concern for origins—reflected in an insistence on the authentic documentation of claims—was another factor in his late obsession with Oriental ethnic groups and etymologies. We have already seen how wary Leibniz was of anti-Islamic propaganda such as Prideaux's *The True Nature of Imposture*. This extended to religious polemics in general.

[I]t is the norm in authors to attribute monstrous opinions, and innumerable sects, to those they do not love. If we had the books of pagans against Christians we would see some interesting things [*des belles choses*], the Christians in their turn attributing to the ancient heretics many things I hold for false.⁹⁶

This historically alert awareness of a possible outside perspective, as yet unreached and untold, on the subject at hand ('How could the thing I am looking at be seen differently by someone else?') is impressive in Leibniz, and yet it does have its limitations. Five years later, in a letter to the same Burnett he had told to rely on Arabic manuscripts for any sound biography of Mohammed, Leibniz relates how the Scholastics "had written several good books against Jews and Mohammedans, to which one could add Aquinas' *Contra Gentiles*"—Leibniz's fondness for the scholastics, here, clearly overriding his better critical judgement.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the fact that Leibniz, in this letter at least, is able to posit an imaginary pagan perspective on the Christian suggests two things: first of all, a tension between Leibniz's historicism and his Christian faith, a prioritising of letter and text over spirit and idea, producing a faint anxiety which could not simply be resolved by citing history's usefulness in illuminating "the foundations of revelation"⁹⁸ Moreover, the passage also highlights an enigmatic motif in Leibniz's discourse—the search for an imagined, as yet undisclosed book or source, one which would be free of any bias or tampering and which would perfectly illuminate a present state of knowledge. Leibniz's hypothetical "pagan" book on Christianity, along with the perfect translation of the Koran ("not from *Christianorum praejudiciiis* but from *Mahometanorum commentariis*"⁹⁹), the genealogy of Mohammed which he sought from scholars such as Ludolf,¹⁰⁰ the elusive oeuvre of Ibn Khallikan, even the ideal bilingual Arabic interpreter Leibniz went to such lengths to try and find . . . all of these represent an imaginary viewpoint outside of Christianity which Leibniz, in his letters, was always trying to get hold of. By 1705, the author of the *Nouveaux Essais* is willing to acknowledge a truth-seeker "can get satisfaction from Arabic, Persian and Turkish historians on the one hand, and Greek, Roman and Western ones on the other".¹⁰¹ The Muslim, previously so inept at history, now becomes an important correlating factor in the verification of the past, a supplier of "powerful evidence of truth" (ibid.). The desire to have a translation of the Koran made by a lay scholar,

and not by a priest, is also significant in this respect. When Leibniz writes how a translation of the “Alcoran”, being prepared by a scholar called Acoluthus, “will be quite another thing from the version the good Father Maracci will give us”,¹⁰² we glimpse a Leibniz who is trying to go *outside* his tribe. The same historical drive which speculated on how Christianity might look to pagan eyes rejects an Islam constructed for Christian readers, by searching for a Muslim Koran, commented on only by Muslims.

This point on the outside, this moment of wilful alienation when a Christian thinker attempts to imagine Christianity and Christians through Muslim eyes, is a gesture of decentring we will encounter again in Kant’s speculations on the kinds of names Turkish travellers might give to European countries.¹⁰³ It is possible to overestimate the significance of such maneuvers—the desire to obtain an outside, apodictic view on one’s own culture and belief system makes momentary use of an alien, perhaps even hostile perspective, without necessarily resulting in any creation of empathy with the briefly visited vantage point of the Other. That Leibniz repeated this ex-static gesture on a number of occasions, even to the point of considering both Muslims and Christians together as inferior versions of Jews,¹⁰⁴ underlines how far Leibniz saw his own Christianity as a detachable identity, one he could step out of from time to time and view with a pagan/non-European gaze. As we move into the 1690s, we see that Islam and the world of cultures and languages it offered increasingly represented one of many such symbolic points of externality for Leibniz.

Between 1692 and 1697, the letters of Leibniz reflect a profound interest in the languages/ethnologies of the Middle East and Central Asia. Eagerly awaiting a copy of D’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque Orientale*, we find Leibniz constantly corresponding with a variety of Orientalists, desperately trying to find out whether the Tartars are from Lithuania, whether Persians and Parthians are of Scythian origin, whether Armenian is related to Ancient Egyptian.¹⁰⁵ He keeps in close contact with the Swedish linguist Sparwenfeld, who in March 1697 writes Leibniz a long letter, giving the exact list and bibliography of a whole set of Arab historians, including Ibn Khallikan, Ibn ‘Asakir, at-Tabari, Ibn ‘Abu-Zar’ and the famous Ibn Khaldun.¹⁰⁶ The impression is of a thinker who is sifting through the world’s languages—as Leibniz himself recommended in the *Nouveaux Essais*, where he advocated the study of Turkish, Finnish and Persian in an attempt “to make clear the origin of nations”.¹⁰⁷ The fervour of his search, the intensity of Leibniz’s desire to locate the *fons et origo* of language, is best reflected in a letter to Landgraf (1692):

To all appearances the Germans themselves, as well as the Slavs, Hungarians, Huns and Turks, have come out of Scythia . . . the language of Persia also contains many words close to German . . . One could explain all these things concerning the origins of peoples, if one knew well the nations of Scythia from Poland up to China, and in order to do

this, I propose, that we try to obtain the *pater noster*, in the languages of all the nations. There would be dozens of them, which would serve as comparison, since the *pater noster* is already in many languages—it would even be a point of religion, “so that every tongue may praise His name”.¹⁰⁸

It has been said that Leibniz’s desire to find the *Ursprache* runs in a fundamentally different direction from his quest for an artificial language. The view of Leibniz’s language theory which has been termed the “Cassirer Thesis”—namely, Ernst Cassirer’s conviction that Leibniz’s conception of natural and artificial languages are ultimately in conflict and that it was Leibniz’s intention to replace the former with the latter¹⁰⁹—seems less convincing when one takes into account the non-European. What links Leibniz’s project for a *characteristica universalis* with his search for an ‘Adamic’ language, more than anything else, is the gaze towards the Orient; if the desire to construct a universal language was influenced to a significant extent by a desire to Christianize the East (“the conversion of mankind”), Leibniz’s investigations into the *Natursprache* are motivated by a desire to unite it. Ideologically, the second aim is much more ambiguous than the first; even though Leibniz’s request for a version of “Our Father” in every language is indicative of his ulterior evangelical motives, this relentless search for the wellspring of race and language (largely synonyms for Leibniz) did bring a new paradigm into his work, one which Leibniz was unconsciously affected by. In many ways, one could suggest that Leibniz’s work on languages gently foreshadows the explosive implications of the work of Jones and other British Sanskritists in the late eighteenth century, where the discovery of common English and Sanskrit Indo-Aryan roots completely “revolutionised European notions of universal history and ethnology” (Trautmann¹¹⁰). Leibniz, writing a century earlier before such events, certainly experiences no such ‘revolution’. When, however, in the *Nouveaux Essais*, we find Hebrew redescribed as a subgroup of Arabic,¹¹¹ one cannot help feeling Leibniz’s attitude to the Islamic Orient has undergone some form of significant change. The emerging possibility of kinship with Turks, Arabs and Persians accounts for the gradual softening of Leibniz’s attitude to Islam from the 1690s onwards.

To share an origin, of course, does not mean to be suddenly filled with brotherly love for one’s ethnological/linguistic seventh cousin (although one hundred and fifty years later Max Müller, passionate reader of Leibniz, would advocate precisely this¹¹²). It does mean, however, having to change one’s strategies for ‘othering’ the enemy. In 1671, Leibniz’s talk was of the Turkish pestilence, the nest of Saracens, the plague of Islam; by 1710, we have a Leibniz who is willing to acknowledge the usefulness of Turkish/Arab historians, the positive, anti-idolatrous elements within Islam and the ethnolinguistic proximity of Arabic and Turkish not merely to German, but also to the hypothetical primordial tongue. This movement

from eternal foe to philological source is no sea-change, nor does it represent an unbroken, continuous movement. What it does suggest, however, is the gradual primacy of Leibniz's philological identity over his political/theological vocabularies, at least with regards to his remarks on Islam. The critic Gensini has astutely noted how Leibniz found "in the historico-natural study of language the key to the *historicity* of human experience".¹¹³ Such historicism would ultimately overwhelm anything else Leibniz had to say about the Muslim. The analogy with Luther runs structurally parallel, even if the content is different: a near obsessive devotion to history, not scripture, would ultimately problematize Leibniz's simplistic picture of the 'Mohammedan' faith. A consecration of the origin, a fidelity to *Ursprungen*, would dilute, though never quite remove, Leibniz's historically inherited antipathy to Islam.

2 Kant, Islam and the Preservation of Boundaries

Moreover, one who begins a social discourse must begin with what is near and present (*gegenwärtig*), and so gradually lead onto the more remote (*auf das Entferntere*) so that it may be of interest. The terrible state of the weather is a useful and customary substitute (*Behelf*) for someone who joins the changing conversation of a gathered company on the street. For to start talking of the latest news from Turkey, which has just come out in the papers, when one walks into the room, over-exerts (*tut Gewalt an*) the powers of the imagination of those who do not see how the person has come to the topic. The mind requires in all communication of thought a certain order (*eine gewisse Ordnung*), so that it agrees, as in a sermon, with the initiated imagination and the beginning, as well as the delivery.

—From Kant's *Anthropology* (1798), own translation.¹

Like many of Kant's references to Islam or an Islamic Orient, this mention of Turkey takes place within a footnote. The passage concerned is a reference to a moment in Kant's *Anthropology* where, having defined the "law of association" as a series of empirical pictures which follow one another, Kant speaks of the common experience of losing one's thread in the middle of a point. When we are lost, says Kant, we have the feeling of having skipped two or three links in the chain of our thought. Here Kant's footnote is both illustrative and preventative: don't plunge your provincial listener immediately into the exotic—speak to them of what is near and immediate. A question, in other words, not so much of how to orientate oneself in thinking, but rather of how *not* to disorientate one's partner.

If the passage makes an unremarkable point, its ordinariness is redeemed by the revealing place of Turkey in the remark. Not merely because it illustrates what Kant will come to represent for Islam in this chapter—a central figure in the Enlightenment footnoting of Islam, a pivotal stage in the rationalist reduction of the Muslim Orient to a curious appendix, an eccentric cross-reference, a pair of problematic parentheses. Not even because of the violence or *Gewalt* which the spontaneous mention of Turkey inflicts upon the rain-soddened, unprepared imagination of the local Königsberger. Kant's throwaway example also reveals, in addition to the insignificance of Islam, an accompanying, unacknowledged anxiety. The Orient, it would appear, disorients; when it appears out of its natural place, when it moves unexpectedly from the "remote" (*das Entferntere*) to invade the near and present (*gegenwärtig*), the result can only be perplexity. Beneath this upsetting of what Kant calls "a certain order" in the communication

of thoughts, lies a genuine fear of displacement, an unease concerning the kinds of directions words like “Turkey” can take us. The questions Kant says we ask ourselves when we lose our train of thought—“Where was I? From where did I start in my speech, and how did I get to where I am?”²—acquire an uncanny metaphysical significance when considered in the wider context of the non-European and its shifting place in the Kantian project of limit-demarcation.

Any consideration of the Islamic Orient in Kant—the sparse but crucial remarks he made about it, and the even more crucial indifference he showed towards it—cannot forego a study of his obsession with the limit, the boundary, the *Grenze*. This commonplace of Kant studies—for what could be more obvious than the primacy of the *Grenze* in Kant, those careful delineations between faith and reason, between the empirical and the transcendental, between life and matter,³ even between the good (moral) and bad (grotesque) sublime?—encounters a strange twist in the light of Kant’s relationship with Islam. “Mohammedanism”, as we shall see, presents the same variety of threats for Kant as it did for Luther—the lurking possibility of radical delimitation, one which would overturn all kinds of boundaries, sexual, political, territorial, as well as the merely philosophical.

As early as 1766, in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, Kant had already defined human understanding as “a small land with many boundaries”—with metaphysics thereby understood to be “a science of the boundaries of human reason”. In contrast to mystics such as Swedenborg, who had wanted to “blindly” embark upon more expansive conquests, Kant declares he is content merely to indicate the boundaries and, implicitly, the arrogance of those who have tried to move past them.⁴ The topographical tone of this motif continues in the preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, even if now the “land” of human understanding has become the “empire” of metaphysics:

Time was, when she [metaphysics] was the *queen* of all the sciences . . . At first, her government, under the administration of the dogmatists, was an absolute despotism. But as the legislative continued to show traces of the ancient barbaric rule, her empire gradually broke up, and intestine wars introduced the reign of *anarchy*; while the *skeptics*, like nomadic tribes, who hate a permanent habitation and a settled mode of living, attacked from time to time those who had organized themselves into civil communities. But their number was, very happily, small; and thus they could not entirely put a stop to the exertions of those who persisted in raising new edifices, although on no settled or uniform plan.⁵

Whatever the empire may have been, it is now in decay. In introducing the reader to his project for a new “critical inquiry into the faculty of reason . . . as well as the extent and limits of this science” (*ibid.*, p. 5), a late

Roman feel creeps into the passage, a desire to restore some former glory to a ruined *caput mundi* now overrun by Vandals and Visigoths—not by any ambitious expansion, but rather by a more modern, Trajanian consolidation of its territories, a more reasonable recognition of its boundaries. In this sense, the clearly Oriental phrase “nomadic tribes” probably has more to do with Goths than Arabs, even if the crucial point to underline is Kant’s insistence on the synonymy of philosophy with edifice, of rationality with stasis and structure—ultimately of *denken* with *bauen*. However, even if human reason may be a *topos*, it is still (as far as this passage is concerned) not an explicitly European place—or rather, the elements which endanger it are not necessarily of non-European provenance. The barbarians who assault the structures metaphysics has so carefully constructed could have their nomadic wanderings just as easily in a German forest as an Arabian desert. A decade later, however, in “On A Newly Raised Noble Tone in Philosophy” (1796), we encounter the same nomadic tribes once again, and this time Kant is a little more specific in his examples. In an essay which hinges on the distinction between the worthy (hardworking, rational) philosopher and the visionary (rapturous, irrational) mystagogue, Kant takes issue with the pseudo-philosophers who arrive at their conclusions without any labour whatsoever, but simply by listening to the “Oracle in themselves”.⁶ Such enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*—a word Kant will crucially link with Mohammed), in contrast to the “slow and measured” progress of the true philosopher, leads to apotheosis, a “leap from concepts to the Unthinkable” (*ibid.*, p. 386). At the very beginning of the essay, the Arab is suggested to us as a racial type inherently given to such false and frivolous delusions of superiority:

Those who have the means to live—amply or poorly—consider themselves noble in comparison with those who have to work in order to live. The Arab, or Mongol, nurtures contempt for the town-dweller, and deems himself noble in comparison with him, as wandering about in the desert with one’s horses and sheep is more entertainment than work.⁷

Thirty years earlier, Kant had already labeled the Arab “the noblest man in the Orient”, albeit with an “inflamed imagination” which “presented things to him in unnatural and distorted images”.⁸ Given the sarcasm with which Kant endows the “noble” (*vornehm*) tone the pseudo-philosophers use, the passage clearly gives a new, ironic sense to the term ‘noble Arab’. Both the Arab, who feels he is an aristocrat, and the charlatan mystagogue who is convinced he is in “supernatural communion” with a transcendent truth, are labouring under a delusion with regards to their true identity. Both share an Oriental aversion to good, Protestant hard work—*Arbeit* being a word which appears again and again throughout the text, the hard work of scholarship and reason juxtaposed against the mystical ease of the

pseudo-philosophers' inspiration. The pride of the Arab, like that of the enthusiast or mystagogue, is an essentially groundless one; the visionary zealot feels he has contacted a source of truth too sublime for anyone else to grasp. Although Kant is clearly irritated by this false sense of superiority, what also links the Arab with the modern mystagogue, apart from this disinclination to hard work and misplaced pride in their deluded superiority, is the threat they represent to philosophy. Esoterically select, rationally unjustifiable claims to have understood something denied to others—and the implicit ascendancy that goes with such claims—leads Kant to view such “enthusiastic visions” (*schwärmerische Vision*) as resulting in “the death of all philosophy”.⁹ Kant repeats the phrase twice, once in the middle of the text and once more at the very end, to emphasize what “A Newly Raised Noble Tone” is really about: an attempt to save the “life” of philosophy from the mystagogues and charlatans by delineating the correct boundaries of what philosophy is and is not, in order to keep true philosophy safe from the “danger” (*Gefahr*) of enthusiasm. The appearance of the Arabs and the Mongol at the beginning of the essay—along with the mention of “those ascetics in the Macarian desert” in the opening lines (p. 377)—makes clearer the subtext of the piece: let us not think like Orientals, lazily accepting the whimsical fancies of our unrestrained imagination as incontestable truths. Kant's fear that such “philosophers of vision” may “gather around them a great following” (something which “the police in the realm of the sciences cannot tolerate”, p. 394) lends a faintly concrete edge to an otherwise philosophical anxiety.

In other words, the country of Philosophy Kant wishes to defend, the land whose borders he wishes to delineate and clarify, is unsurprisingly a very European place. Its rational sovereignty—indeed, its *seriousness*—has to be safeguarded against the nomadic, wandering, carefree thought-train. Kant's Lutheran anxiety concerning the Arab—who “hates a permanent habitation and a settled mode of living”, who is unable to stay put in one place—is therefore both anthropologically and metaphorically grounded. The life of ‘true’ philosophy must necessarily reside in *bauen*, not *irren*.

This nomadic threat to the intact boundary, this solicitude on Kant's part to protect a certain balance and stability from an itinerant, landless entity (and here, as we shall see, Kant's Mohammedans and Jews converge in a number of revealing ways) finds a more explicit connection to Mohammed in an early work, “An Essay on the Illnesses of the Head” (1765), where Kant repeats Luther's association of Islam with Anabaptist insurrection. Having examined both hypochondria and the more positive version of “Enthusiasm” (love, the kind of enthusiasm which produces “good moral feelings”), Kant moves onto an examination of the “fanatic” (*Visionär, Schwärmer*):

This person is actually a madman with an allegedly incommunicable inspiration and a great understanding with the divine forces. Human

nature knows no greater deception . . . when the outbreak (*Ausbruch*) is recent, when the deceiver has talent and when the masses are prepared ingest the ferment, then even the state from time to time suffers spasms. Zeal (*Schwärmerei*) leads the zealot to the external, led Mahomet onto his princely throne, led Jan van Leyden onto the gallows.¹⁰

Firstly, and most importantly, Islam here is reduced to pure fantasy, one of the many “illnesses of the head”. Whereas later texts such as *Physical Geography* and *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* will at least attribute some nominally monotheistic status to Islam as a religion, here Islam is seen quite simply as a symptom, the consequence of an excessive imagination. Between the two Enlightenment versions available for a rejection of Mohammed, Kant chooses madness and derangement over manipulation and deception. In this sense Islam, rather like Leibniz’s “plague of Mohammedanism”, also becomes a disease, a malady which might “break out” whenever one’s rational understanding falls prey to the phantasms of *Schwärmerei*. Moreover, the use of the term *Schwärmerei* mixes entomology with pathology. As Fenves points out, the word for fanaticism comes from the German for swarm (*Schwarm*), as revealed in Lessing’s explicit definition of *Schwärmerei*: “The desire to make a swarm is thus definitive of the *Schwärmer*”.¹¹ Again echoing Leibniz’s “nest of Saracens”, the swarm of Islam threatens Kant’s clearly defined realm of reason. The disconcerting buzz of the irregular and the excessive, be it armies of Mohammedans on the borders of Europe or sects of fanatics and Spinozists from within, always promises to overthrow the reign of reason with its insistent murmur. Did Kant think it would ever go away? Only, it would appear, by the strengthening and clarifying of the *Grenzen*: “There is no more secure means of eradicating *Schwärmerei* at the root than the determination of the limits of the pure faculty of reason”.¹²

What is interesting is how psychological imbalance and social disruption are neatly tied together here—still too early to begin the great Western tradition of associating the rise of Mohammed with Robespierre and the *terreur*, Kant takes instead the Lutheran option of reading Islam as a collection of Middle Eastern Anabaptists, a trope clearly assisted by the concept of polygamy (the Anabaptist revolutionary prophet Jan van Leyden had allegedly over two hundred wives).¹³ This key anxiety concerning the transgression of limits—with the awful consequence that one category might spill inextricably into another—lies at the heart of Kant’s paucity of discourse concerning Islam. The anxiety is compounded by the fact that the cause of the transgression—the “allegedly incommunicable inspiration”—lies by virtue of its sublimity outside contestation, circumventing rational debate by constantly appealing to the unthinkable, inducing in the enraged rationalist the very sense of ‘helplessness’ Kant would later attribute to the dynamical sublime.

There is certainly a question of pride here. Not simply the *Stolz* the *Critique of Judgment* is willing to attribute to “Mohammedans”, but also Kant’s own pride—both as a Christian and a rationalist—at Islam’s double affront to his world-view, mystically bypassing his epistemology and scripturally post-dating his creed. “The Jews”, writes Kant, “like the Mohammedans, despised the maxims of other religions, since it was they who were uniquely in possession of a deity”.¹⁴ Kant’s emphasis on the Semitic prohibition of the image, one can’t help feeling, cynically suggests the consequent ineffability as a way of facilitating their superiority. As we shall see, Kant’s own views on the sublime—and the *Gewalt* or violence it inflicts upon our imagination—will also be telling in this respect.

The annoyance and hurt pride Kant feels with regards to “Mohammedans”—both the rationalist pique he feels at their super-sensible claims to knowledge and his Christian indignation at their exclusivist revelation—also emerges in the anthropological texts as a resentment of their ill-treatment of Christians. At various scattered points throughout *Physical Geography* we are reminded of the subordinate status of the “non-Mohammedan”; little is known about Saudi Arabia because “non-Muslim Europeans may not go there at all, as they poison the holy air according to the Mohammedans”.¹⁵ In his section on Ottoman Egypt, Kant remarks how Christians may not travel on horseback, but only on donkeys, “as in other Turkish lands”.¹⁶ Even in remoter places such as the Maldives, the fact that the inhabitants are too proud to eat with anyone who is not their equal is immediately preceded by the assertion: “The religion is Mohammedan”.¹⁷ The racial superiority of Kant’s Europeans (“The Negro himself,” we will recall, “undoubtedly holds the lowest of all levels by which we designate the different races”¹⁸) augments his indignation here and reminds us once again of Islam’s false claims to aristocracy. Just as the Arab wrongly feels himself to be noble because he doesn’t have to work, the pride of Islam encourages in these otherwise inferior peoples a mistaken sense of superiority, even haughtiness. Forcing the Christian to travel on a donkey—and the “non-European” to stay far away from Mecca—angers Kant not simply because such practices are unjust, but also because they usurp a natural (Christian, European) hierarchy.

Kant’s rationalist resentment of the mystic’s truth-claim, his indignation at the visionary’s refusal to respect the limits of rational religion, inevitably leads us into the sensual and, implicitly, the sexual. A faith whose followers wander all over the place, whose leaders so easily trespass the boundaries of reason, can hardly be expected to respect the limits of morality. Kant’s references, in this respect, certainly seem to reflect the general synonymy of Orient and sensuality accepted in his day. In the *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*, we are assured that “the inhabitant of the Orient . . . has no concept of the morally beautiful, which can be united with [the moral impulse], he loses even the worth of the sensuous enjoyment, and

his harem is a constant source of unrest”, stressing once again the constant motion of the Oriental, this time resulting from his excessive inclination to the sensual.¹⁹ Defaming what many Romantics would later celebrate, Kant locates feeling and enthusiasm at the heart of the Islamic faith—Mohammed, we are told in *Physical Geography*, was “passionate, eloquent, handsome” (*lieblich, beredt, schön*).²⁰ Persians, moreover, “intoxicate themselves with opium openly, and with bang and drink from poppy seeds” (*ibid.*, p. 396). Kant, in a number of references, appeared to believe that opium was a central and permissible practice within the Muslim faith—“Mohammedanism” he writes in 1797, “which bans wine, has chosen very badly to allow opium”.²¹ A year later, in *Anthropologie*, we even find (as in Leibniz) the suggestion that the Turks’ courage comes from the madness induced by opium.²² As we move from a Christian to a rationalist disapproval of the “Mohammedan’s” slavish devotion to the sensual—frowned on now because it not only endangers the soul but also distorts and distracts the mind—we encounter the essence of Kant’s derogatory references to a sensual Muslim Orient: a concern for the limit, for the sanctity of the *Grenze* which opium, passion, delirium so easily overwhelms. Towards the end of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant is keen to stress the primacy (*das Primat*) of pure practical reason over its speculative counterpart, entertaining the possibility that practical reason might “remove the bounds which [speculative reason] had set to itself, and give it up to every nonsense or delusion of imagination”.²³ Having aired this danger, we are reassured that such a thing could not happen when the relationship between pure speculative and pure practical reason is properly understood:

In fact, so far as practical reason is taken as dependent on pathological conditions, that is, as merely regulating the inclinations under the sensible principle of happiness, we could not require speculative reason to take its principles from such a source. Mohammed’s paradise, or the melting union (*die schmelzende Vereinigung*) with the Deity of the theosophists and mystics, would press their monstrosities (*Ungeheuer*) onto reason according to the taste of each, and one might as well have no reason as surrender it in such fashion to all sorts of dreams. (*Ibid.*, p. 125)

Kant rather prudishly circumvents what he understands by *Mahomets Paradies*, although he has talked enough of harems and Oriental voluptuaries elsewhere to give us a general idea²⁴—the West’s standard motif of the Koranic heaven as a place of endless sexual enjoyment, where the worthy believers legitimately partake in the eternal pleasures offered to them by their *houris*. It is interesting, and by no means inconsistent, that paradisaic sex is offered alongside the mystical annihilation of selfhood as examples of the “monstrosities” unrestricted speculation (led by taste) would impose upon reason. The description Kant offers for such mystical

de-selving (“melting union”) is already sexually charged. “Mohammed’s paradise”, with its blasphemous transplanting of the sexual into the realm of the spiritual, its scandalous blending of sacred and profane, its unspeakable evaporation of the boundary between the pleasures of this world and those of the next, would be for Kant every bit as “monstrous” as the mystical evaporation of the self. The melting of two bodies into one is no more and no less “monstrous” than the absorption of an individual subject into some transcendental oneness. Without seizing upon this word “monstrous” (*Ungeheuer*) with too much Freudian glee, it is a word which appears in Kant whenever the precious rational space of his subjectivity is threatened. This is often, though by no means always, Oriental—“the monstrous system of Lao-Kiun”, for example, in which the subject is “swallowed up in the abyss of the Godhead”,²⁵ but also the “abortive monster of Cromwell’s despotic republic”.²⁶ Whenever the natural terrain of reason (to return to our topographical motif) is “surrendered” to the whims of fancy and unreason, the “monstrous” inevitably makes its appearance. Kant’s repressed anxiety concerning the loss of this agency, the possible hijacking of the rational subject, finds its most dramatic expression in this word *Ungeheuer*, which flashes out from time to time through the chinks in Kant’s otherwise calm, controlled, all-explicating prose.

Islam is, therefore, an example of a failed rational religion. Kant’s rational understanding of religion as being based on, and leading to, morality—what Cassirer called, in his Rousseauistic reading of Kant, an “ethical theology”²⁷ (“If [a verse from scripture] flatly contradicts morality, then it cannot be from God”²⁸) allows only one possible frame of reference for the reception of Islam: that of an over-enthusiastic visionary whose own imaginative excesses have crucially overflowed the rational (moral) checks every true religion should have within itself. In *Religion Within the Boundaries of Reason Alone*, Kant declares one of his projects to be showing how “reason can be found to be not only compatible with Scripture but also at one with it”.²⁹ *Mahomets Paradies* clearly fails this litmus test of rational/moral conformity, preventing it from adopting the title of a “pure religion of reason” (*ibid.*). If Islam is anything for Kant, it is the triumph of revelation over reason, of sublimity over accountability, of psychology over theology, of imagination over morality; on the battlefield of Kant’s Islam, reason has had to give ground to the “monsters” of Mohammed’s fantasies. Just as *Schwärmerei* is the death of all philosophy, ungrounded, non-rational, unchecked revelation is the death of all (true) religion.

In this presentation of an opiate, vision-ridden, sense-dominated, non-rational creed, Kant runs into the same dilemma as Luther: namely, a conflict of stereotypes between ‘Mohammedan libertinism’ and ‘Mohammedan fanaticism’. Just as Luther never reconciles “the Turk’s dissolute life” and the “harlotry” of the Koran³⁰ with their asceticism, fanatical courage and religious devotion,³¹ Kant’s emphasis on a sensual faith is undermined elsewhere by a very different version of Islam—one more to do

with harsh severity and “devotional practices . . . of a fierce kind” (6:184) than harems, opium taking and tales of sexual paradise. We even find Persians juxtaposed against their Sunni brethren as “not such strict followers of Islam” because of their “tolerably mild interpretation of the Koran”.³² Of course, the strongest argument against any pleasure-loving, hedonistic version of the Islamic faith would be the *arkan al-islam* or five pillars of Islam—obligations which every Muslim is exhorted to perform. Kant was aware of these, and in *Religion Within the Boundaries* he looks for a way of reconciling a ‘sensual’ Islam with the kind of faith which would impose such a series of apparently ascetic rituals upon its believers:

Even where the conviction has already taken hold that everything in these matters depends on the moral good . . . the sensuous human being still searches for an escape route by which to circumvent that arduous condition: namely that if he only observes *the custom* (the formalities), God will surely accept the act itself . . . Thus in every type of public faith the human being has devised certain practices for himself, as means of grace, even though such practices are not related in all faiths, as in the Christian, to practical concepts and to dispositions conformable to them. (For instance, of the five great commands of the Mohammedan faith—washing, praying, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage to Mecca—almsgiving alone would deserve to be excepted, if it occurred from a truly virtuous and at the same time religious disposition to human duty, and would thus also truly deserve to be regarded as a means of grace; but in fact, since in this faith almsgiving can well coexist with the extortion from others of things which are offered to God in the person of the poor, it does not deserve to be thus exempted.)³³

The fact that the ineluctable inclination of the unreflective believer to the sensual forever confines them to the surface of the image/practice, slavishly tying them to the “formalities” of their custom, explains how the Muslim faith may be simultaneously an unspiritual, carnal creed *and* a harsh, severe dogma. Islam’s fanaticism, far from being unworldly, is precisely a consequence of its sensuality, of its never moving beyond the external; for Kant, the Muslim’s piety and strictness lies in his devotion to the superficial, in his absence of depth—in structuralist terms, in his inability to perceive the signified on the other side of the signifier. Kant’s Mohammedan prays his *namaaz*, goes on his pilgrimage and keeps his fast in perfect devotion to his outward appearance, without ever being able to move beyond the practice. In such a way, Kant gradually divorces Islam from any ethical content (in contrast to Christianity, whose practices relate directly to practical concepts and the “moral good”) until we arrive at *zekat*, the Muslim equivalent of the tithe. Here Kant encounters a problematic similarity and produces the same kind of ‘almost’ (*fast*) Luther had to find in dealing

with the ‘Mohammedans’ predestination and iconoclasm: Islam momentarily escapes the slightly Papist (*Pfaffentum*) label of “fetish-faith” in this spiritual obligation which also leads to a moral good. This could *almost* be Christianity, were it not for the prevalence of force within their faith which robs such potentially “virtuous and at the same time religious” dispositions of any value. In order to keep Islam distinguishable from Christianity and outside the “true (moral) service of God”,³⁴ Kant alludes to—though neither documents nor develops—a perceived coercion to charity in Muslim societies. In the middle of an otherwise transcendental analysis, Kant employs a recourse to the empirical to justify his point. Just as Luther had been forced to resort to standard motifs of fanatical Turks to explain why Muslim fatalism was different from his own doctrine, Kant has to ground his distinction between Christian and Muslim almsgiving, at first glance so similar, in a reference to the anthropological. This is neither the first nor the last time Kant will employ purely external descriptions of the Mohammedan, in particular the race type of the Arab—their pride, their wandering nature, their “heated imagination” (*erhitzte Einbildungskraft*³⁵)—to justify his perception of Islam.

ISLAM AS SUBLIME THREAT

When in an aesthetic judgment we consider nature as a might that has no dominance over us, then it is dynamically sublime. If we are to judge nature as sublime dynamically, we must present it as arousing fear . . . whatever we strive to resist is an evil, and it is an object of fear if we find that our ability [to resist it] is no match for it.

—*Critique of Judgment*, p. 119

Kant’s Occidental concern for the sanctity of the boundary—his desire for it to remain unbreached by the swarms of the Orient—spills over into his notion of the sublime. Commentaries on the Kantian sublime and the two central texts that deal with it—*Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) and, twenty-five years later, the middle sections of the *Critique of Judgment*—have acquired their own status as a genre in itself. From an effort to understand the *Observations* as an early attempt to “propagate” Rousseau’s notions on the rights of man³⁶ to the plethora of descriptions offered for the third *Critique*’s “Analytic of the Sublime”—Altieri’s moment of wishfully triumphant self-delusion,³⁷ de Man’s Gödellesque definition of the mathematical sublime as “an extension of the linguistic model beyond its system of tropes”,³⁸ Neil Hertz’s “drama of collapse and compensation”³⁹ (or what Yu Liu has termed “the crisis-and-recovery mechanism” of the *Critique*⁴⁰)—Kant’s treatment of the sublime is generally understood to be problematic to some varying degree. However, what is absent in these responses to the Kantian sublime, particularly

amongst the various reworkings of these crucial two dozen pages in the *Critique* as an early, half-conscious version of some Freudian *fort-da* game, is a geo-cultural location of Kant's gesture, a fantasized triumph of European reason over Oriental despotism.

Certainly, Kant's references to the sublime and the Islamic Orient lie very close together, often to the point of synonymy. After *Physical Geography*, Kant's *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* constitutes his most Oriental text, with its abundant references to the Middle East—Hasselquist's Egyptian pyramids, colossal Tartar deserts, the death of Nadir Shah, the dark dream of Carazan, merchant of Baghdad, the inevitable references to the harem, not to mention pat, anthropological descriptions of those races inclined towards the sublime (Germans, Spaniards and Arabs) and the beautiful (Italians, Frenchmen and Persians). Later on in the third *Critique*, apart from another reference to pyramids and "Oriental voluptuaries",⁴¹ both Islam and Judaism become explicitly connected with the idea of the sublime, as we shall see, on the basis of the Judaeo-Islamic prohibition of the image. Whatever is to be deduced from these examples, the Orient certainly emerges as a sublime place—indeed, a place whose inhabitants and cultures have a greater receptivity for (at times read 'vulnerability to') the "impetuous agitations" of the sublime (p. 134).

Of course, it would be exaggerating to claim that the middle sections of Kant's third *Critique* are really 'about' Islam; the "Analytic of the Sublime" plays out its own peculiar set of operations on a number of levels, not least of all in its attempt to reassert the autonomy of the Kantian subject in the face of the unrepresentable. What is not exaggerated, however, is the discernment of a certain (and by now familiar) anxiety within these pages; in its talk of the "violence" (*Gewalt*) the sublime does to our imagination, the way it diminishes us and forces the "recognition of our physical impotence" (p. 120), the feelings of "inadequacy" (*Unangemessenheit*) in the face of the sublime which ultimately produces a resistance in the rational subject, and the at times explicit cultural positioning of the "fully civilized" European against the "savage" (*dem Wilden*) . . . through all of these tropes, an implicit movement of reassertion and self-justification is taking place, a vindication moreover which plays itself out against a subtly Occidental background. The topographical echoes of Kant's concern for the limit and its preservation—his desire to keep the monstrous outside the boundaries of reason—re-emerges in the "Analytic of the Sublime" as a concern for the dignity of reason in the face of that which threatens to completely overwhelm it.

Most immediately, Kant's reflections on *das Erhabene* in the middle of the third *Critique* represent in many ways his attempt to deal with that which radically lies outside his ken ("nothing that can be an object of the senses is to be called sublime", p. 106). In the pages that follow a curious three-way struggle emerges between imagination and the feeling of the sublime—for the sublime, we should recall, is no place or name, but above all the judgement of a sensation—and between reason and the imagination.

This tension explains the agonistic tone which pervades Sections 23 to 29, the constant, stifled sense of strife with which Kant narrates the struggle of reason with imagination, and of imagination with the sublime. It is a tension which arises from a definite sense of unease, a disquiet on Kant's part concerning the kinds of implications the presence of the sublime poses for the rational subject. If beauty, we are told, brings the mind "restful contemplation", the feeling of the sublime provokes "mental agitation" (p. 101), a loss of control whose traumatic note is sounded at the very beginning as "the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital forces" (p. 98). The moment of the sublime, in other words, begins with this moment of blocking, of checking, of caesura; a moment when the rational project of apprehension and comprehension is stopped in its epistemological tracks by something which utterly resists representation (something "incommensurate with our power of exhibition", p. 99). Kant's most dramatic expression for this loss of control, for the feeling of vulnerability and helplessness which the sublime induces in the subject, appears in Section 27:

This agitation (above all at its inception) can be compared with a vibration, i.e. with a rapid alternation of repulsion from, and attraction to, one and the same object. If a thing is excessive for the imagination . . . then the thing is, as it were, an abyss in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself. (p. 115)

Kant, in his desire to fence off the space of philosophy from the wandering Arab, to keep the monstrous paradise of Mohammed out of rational religion, even to keep the mention of a country such as Turkey out of everyday conversation, exhibits precisely this agitation whenever the *Morgenland* looms near. This determination not to lose oneself in the abyss of the Orient—not to be distracted, not to lose one's train of thought, so that the speaker has to ask "Where was I? How did I get to where I am?"⁴²—requires locating the proper distance towards it, so that the European observer may represent the non-European accurately enough without getting too close towards it. Kant's colonial example (taken from a French General who later served on Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798) illustrates the near ubiquitous attraction-repulsion, danger-charm paradigm of the nineteenth-century Orient:

This serves to explain a comment made by Savary in his report on Egypt: that in order to get the full emotional effect from the magnitude of the pyramids one must neither get too close to them nor stay too far away. For if one stays too far away, then the apprehended parts (the stones on top of one another) are presented only obscurely, and hence their presentation has no effect on the subject's aesthetic judgment; and if one gets too close, then the eye needs some time to complete the apprehension from the base to the peak, but during that time some of

the earlier parts are inevitably extinguished in the imagination before it has apprehended the later ones, and hence the comprehension is never complete. Perhaps the same observation can explain the bewilderment or kind of perplexity that is said to seize the spectator who for the first time enters St Peter's Basilica in Rome. For he has the feeling that his imagination is inadequate for exhibiting the idea of a whole, [a feeling] in which imagination reaches its maximum, and as it strives to expand that maximum, it sinks back into itself, but consequently comes to feel a liking [that amounts to] an emotion. (pp. 108–9)

The passage, read metaphorically, could almost be a lesson in good Empire ('not too close, not too far'); the threatening magnitude of the pyramids has to be somehow contained, and yet processed empirically enough to be comprehended. The ideal colonial distance General Savary recommends—and Kant underwrites—prevents the pyramids from sliding subversively into formlessness, so that the observer always keeps the top and the bottom safely in view. Given his sense of hurt pride elsewhere at manifestations of Oriental superiority over Occident, Kant is careful not to acknowledge too quickly the "inadequacy" an Egyptian pyramid makes a European feel. The crucial "perhaps" in the middle of the passage acts as a kind of ideological buffer zone between African and European sublime, inserting a more Christian pyramid in between the words 'Egypt' and 'inadequate', leading us to a more acceptable humbling of the European's imagination. The sense of inadequacy induced by a Catholic church, as opposed to an Egyptian pyramid, comes across more as a spiritual deflation of *hubris*, rather than a problematic reminder of Oriental empires infinitely older, larger and grander than those of the present Europeans.

The prevalence of these two key words in the "Analytic"—violence (*Gewalt*) and inadequacy (*Unangemessenheit*)—stems precisely from this formlessness of the sublime, in Savary's case the frustration of not being able to see the whole picture. This is not quite the same *Gewalt* that the mention of Turkey inflicts on the imagination of the unprepared listener, whose *Einbildungskraft* suffers a quantitative rather than qualitative violence—that is, not the challenge of the unthinkable, but merely the unusual. The unrepresentability of the sublime here is what is "as it were violent to our imagination" (p. 99)—our sense of inadequacy stems from this sudden, forced acknowledgment of our impotence (*Ohnmacht*). In this attribution of formlessness to the sublime (and we should not forget that both Allah and Jehovah share the formlessness of General Savary's elusive pyramid) it is possible to perceive an early fear of the absurd—or if 'absurd' is too modern a term for a 1790 text, certainly an alarm at the absence of any intelligibility or purpose in a phenomenon. In the paragraph immediately following the example of the pyramids, Kant writes: "An object is monstrous (*Ungeheuer*) if by its magnitude it nullifies the purpose that constitutes its concept". The crucial significance of this relationship between

purpose and being, between *Zweck* and *Sein*, lie at the heart of Kant's abyssal anxiety concerning that which has no apparent *raison d'être*. The violence the ineffable sublime inflicts upon us, the abyss it presents us with, is monstrous not just because it threatens to engulf us (thereby dissolving our identity), but also because it supplies us with no sign we can apprehend and counter-interpret.

Kant's reductive, unconvincing description of the sublime at the beginning of the "Analytic" as a "mere appendix" (p. 100) stands in ironic contrast to the abyssal threat it presents for our rational sovereignty. Critics such as Weiskl astutely discern the whole point of the Kantian sublime to be teleological, a staged "aggrandizement of reason"⁴³—or, as Yu Liu puts it, a "fantasized vision of reason's total triumph at the expense of imagination".⁴⁴ When we read in the "Analytic" how "the subject's own inability uncovers in him the consciousness of an unlimited ability" (p. 116), it is difficult not to see Kant turning defeat into victory, finitude into self-reflection, inadequacy into self-knowledge. We have already seen elsewhere how Kant, in his own words, saw "Mohammedanism" as "distinguished by its pride, because it finds confirmation of its faith in victories and in the subjugation of many peoples".⁴⁵ This imperialist pseudo-triumphalism of Islam—particularly when it takes place at the expense of Christian armies and peoples—constitutes an abiding source of irritation to Kant. His resentment of the Islamic Orient on a variety of levels—his indignation at the Ottomans' treatment of their subjects, at the haughtiness Islam shows towards other believers, at its perceived pride in the exclusivity of its revelations, his awareness of the expansion and success of the "adventure" of "Mohammedanism" and its fantasies, his rationalist irritation at the *Schwärmerei* of its leader, not to mention his deeper uncertainties concerning the size, age and grandeur of an Orient he could only ever read about—forms a significant, though by no means exclusive, background against which such fantasized re-enactments of *Vernunft's* mastery over imagination can be read. In one sense, at least, Kant's anxiety concerning Islam is sublimated into his various anxieties concerning the sublime. In neutralizing, even putting to productive use, the threat the sublime posed for the Kantian subject, Kant also tries to contain a series of wider, more implicit sources of peril.

The only specific reference to Islam within the "Analytic of the Sublime" occurs on the penultimate page, in a frequently cited remark on the sublimity of the Jewish (and Islamic) *Bilderverbot* or prohibition of images. Kant has just remarked how "the impetuous agitations of the mind" may only be considered an effect of the sublime if they leave the subject with "a mental attunement" to principles of the purely intellectual ("supersensible"). The true sublime "always has reference to the subject's way of thinking [*Denkungsart*]"⁴⁶—its agitations reach the mental, moral, intellectual depth of the subject—they do not stop at the merely sensible. Otherwise such agitations would constitute nothing more than the "enjoyment" that "Oriental voluptuaries find so appealing when they have their bodies thoroughly

kneaded, as it were, and have all their muscles and joints gently squeezed and bent" (p. 134). In other words, there are good and bad versions of the sublime, sensual and spiritual ones, Oriental (passive, indulgent) responses to *das Erhabene* and Occidental (active, edifying) ones. In many ways, Kant has to make and reinforce this distinction because another problematic similarity is about to emerge between his *Denkungsart* and what he elsewhere called the "Orient's completely different way of thinking" (*die ganze andere Denkungsart des Morgens*)⁴⁷—a mistrust and aversion towards the icon which Protestant, Jewish and Muslim faiths share:

Perhaps the most sublime passage in the Jewish Law is the commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or on earth, or under the earth, etc. This commandment alone can explain the enthusiasm that the Jewish people in its civilized era felt for its religion when it compared itself with other peoples, or can explain the pride that Islam inspires. The same holds also for our presentation of the moral law, and for the predisposition within us for morality. It is indeed a mistake to worry that depriving this presentation of whatever could commend it to the senses will result in its carrying with it no more than a cold and lifeless approval without any moving force or emotion. It is exactly the other way round. For once the senses no longer see anything before them, while yet the unmistakable and indelible idea of morality remains, one would sooner need to temper the momentum of an unbounded imagination so as to keep it from rising to the level of enthusiasm, than to seek to support these ideas with images and childish devices for fear that they would otherwise be powerless. (p. 135)

When it comes to the face of God, Judaism and Islam present a void, a divine abyss, a desert devoid of any representation. The slightly Catholic reference to "images and childish devices" suggests a Protestant sympathy on Kant's part with the Judaeo-Islamic *Bilderverbot*, even if this passage seems to be Semitically linking Christianity's sister religions together by severing them from any association with the Christian faith. As Kant's belief in the absolutely non-Jewish nature of Christianity is well known ("the Jewish faith stands in no essential connection whatever, i.e. in no unity of concepts, with the ecclesiastical history [of Christianity]"⁴⁸), the value of this common "sublime" feature of Judaeo-Islamic law remains ambiguous. On the one hand, the suggestion is that Islam and Judaism are more "sublime" religions than Christianity because of their apophatic insistence on the unrepresentability of their deity; this semantic vacuum within the two faiths creates a space which excites the imagination of their believers. Kant's proper response to this—not necessarily to supply icons and other ritualistic trappings to puncture the vacuum and pre-empt the overactive imagination, but rather check and moderate the enthusiasm it

arouses—does suggest that this control of the “unbounded imagination” is something neither Jews nor Muslims have succeeded in doing.

In *A History of the Enemy*, Gil Anidjar asks what, apart from the *Bilderverbot*, might justify the juxtaposition of Islam and Judaism here.⁴⁹ Amongst possible solutions, one common denominator may be that of emptiness. For very different reasons, Judaism and Islam have historically been understood as ‘hollow’ faiths. In the eyes of many of Kant’s contemporaries, Judaism was an empty cocoon, a shell, a relic, the birth and resurrection of Christ having emptied Judaism of any real necessity or significance (or as Kant put it, the Jews “have long had garments without a man in them”).⁵⁰ Islam, moreover, as we have already seen in Luther (and will see again in Hegel), constitutes little more than a fantastic façade, bereft of content, a ‘fake’ revelation, an empty creed. When Kant reports elsewhere how Mohammed “often argued for the validity of his message on the grounds of the beauty of his style”,⁵¹ it becomes clear Kant saw Islam as a purely emotional phenomenon, a work of rhetoric, a dream translated into verse and rituals. The mystery of the Semitic faith is a false enigma, the mystery of an empty tomb, rather than a hidden treasure. In both cases, runs Kant’s subtext, Jews and Muslims have no image to present of God because they do not know who He is.

The absence of Islamic images for God, one can’t help feeling, not only reinforces the notion of a hollow creed, what Schlegel would later call a “dead, empty Theism”,⁵² but also facilitates for the believer the Mohammedan fantasies which are so noxious to reason. When Kant, in the very next passage, defines *Schwärmerei*/fanaticism as “the delusion of wanting to see something beyond all bounds of sensibility” (p. 135), we realize that the sublimity of the *Bilderverbot* in Islam is no advantage, but rather a liability. The inability of Islam to present a human face for God has resulted in the replacement of revelation with dream, of spiritual truth with personal fantasy. Presented with a blank screen, the Arab has chosen to fill in the space himself with his own “over-heated imagination”. Instead of acknowledging a resemblance to Protestant icon phobia, Kant translates the Islamic prohibition of the image as an explanation of Islam’s revelation itself, simultaneously providing an implicit warning against the dangers of the sublime and a pseudo-anthropological explanation of “Mohammedan pride”. The *Bilderverbot*—and the false sublime it inspires—becomes a kind of creative aphrodisiac, exciting the Semitic imagination to wild and wilder unchecked fantasies.

KANT, ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE MUSLIM WORLD: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS A MERE APPENDIX

[A]n illusion may be said to consist in treating the subjective condition of thinking as being knowledge of the object.

—*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 396⁵³

In this chapter, we have been trying to defamiliarize a latent topography in the Kantian project of limit-demarcation—namely, by showing how his remarks on the “Mohammedan” Other reflect, and to a certain extent enable, a rational, ordered and very European space of philosophy to exist. The ejection of the non-European from this space and the absence (certainly in comparison with Leibniz) of any serious consideration of it, indicates how crucially significant boundaries are in Kant—and how the irrelevance of Islam stems precisely from its being pushed over to the other side of such *Grenze*, into the nomadic hinterlands of the sense-driven, irrational and ultimately insignificant.

Kant’s classic insistence on the necessary separation of the transcendental from the empirical—his desire, for example, to write a moral philosophy which would be “carefully purified of everything empirical”⁵⁴—plays a central role in this marginalization of the foreign. The disputed status of anthropology within Kant’s oeuvre—given Kant’s own desire to “free” moral philosophy from everything which is “only empirical” and therefore “belonging to anthropology”—highlights the uneasy relationship between pure reason and ‘impure’ empirical data in Kant.⁵⁵ Indeed, the purified transparency of the Kantian subject—in whose veins, Dilthey famously claimed, “flows not real blood but rather the thinned fluid of reason as pure thought activity”⁵⁶—continues to be one of the main objections to the project of the Critiques. It is certainly one of the oldest—Hamann was one of the first critics to draw attention to Kant’s “Gnostic hatred of matter”, a rationalistic evacuation of the world’s richness and meaning in which “nothing remains but the sighing of the wind”.⁵⁷ Kuehn, Kant’s most recent biographer, rightly points out how later Romantics (such as Heine) would impose the colourlessness of Kant’s philosophy onto the thinker himself; contributing towards the caricature of the unfeeling, unsmiling, punctual Prussian we have today.⁵⁸ The political implications accompanying such evaporation of detail, however, have been most fully developed by more recent feminist critiques, redescribing Kant’s project as “a fetishism of objectivity” (Schott), imposing a “systematic masculine bias in the standard conception of rationality” (Mosser) and ultimately producing a philosophy in which “being (ontology) has been divorced from knowing (epistemology), and both have been separated from either ethics or politics” (Flax).⁵⁹

Kant’s colourful, anecdote-strewn summary of various travellers’ observations on a variety of the world’s different cultures—*Physische Geographie* (1802)—was one of his last published texts, and has never been translated into English. From the point of view of our own interest in Islam, it is the text where Kant has the most to say about Muslim beliefs, nations and cultures, and where he reveals an unexpectedly detailed knowledge about Shi’ia Islam and the pilgrimage site of Mecca, of how Turks sit and Arabs recite poetry, knowledge which elsewhere only ever slips through the wall of Kant’s abstract prose in minor allusions or incidental footnotes. In

comparison with the rest of Kant's critical project—which “abstracts from all content of the knowledge of understanding . . . and deals with nothing but the mere form of thought”⁶⁰—*Physical Geography* almost adopts the status of Kant's secret erotic diary, where he finally allows himself to revel with utter depravity in the empirical details he had kept separate from his more ‘serious’ works.

Kant's anthropological remarks highlight a number of interesting tensions within the thinkers' general attitude towards the Muslim world—and toward Arabs and Turks in particular, tensions which range from subtle variations to outright contradictions. In *Physical Geography*, for example, a relatively harmless picture of the Turks is painted—they are:

descended from Tartars, well-built, hospitable, charitable towards the poor and travellers in their caravansary. They are, moreover, quite given to laziness, and can sit next to one another for hours without speaking. Stinginess is their foremost vice. (p. 406)

The description seems to provide a marginally less malevolent variation on Leibniz's historically inept Muslims. Good-natured, aimless and unreflective, they epitomize the nomadic, Oriental inverse of the empire-building, consciousness-cultivating, modern European. This concurs generally with Kant's belief in the intellectual superiority of Europe over other cultures, at least in terms of abstract philosophical thinking—in his lectures on the *Jäsche Logic*, we read how the Zoroastrian Zend-Avesta possesses “not the slightest trace of philosophy”, how Egyptian wisdom is nothing more than “mere child's play” and how the philosophical achievements of Persians and Arabs basically count as nothing more than imitations of Aristotle.⁶¹ Ottoman and Selçuk imperialism, however, appears to elevate the Turk from the status of mere nomad to instructor of civilization; elsewhere in *Physical Geography*, Kant supplies a characteristically racial-climactic description to account for why races from equatorial climates—Romans, Greeks, Turks, Vikings, Tamburlaine and Genghis Khan—“have always held southern lands in awe by means of their weapons and art” (pp. 317–18). This generous concession, whereby the lazy Turk is allowed to cross over the boundary separating colonizer and colonized, instructor and instructed, finds an even more sophisticated version in *Anthropologie*, where Kant briefly considers (within a footnote, naturally) what kind of Europe a Turk might see if he were to travel there:

If the Turks, who name Christian Europe Frankestan, were to travel in order to learn about the people and their characteristics (which no people apart from the Europeans do and which proves the narrow mentality of all the others) they would perhaps make the following divisions, after showing the imperfections in their characters:

1. Land of fashions (France) 2. Land of moods (England) 3. Land of presentiment (Spain) 4. Land of magnificence (Italy) 5. Land of Titles (Germany, together with Denmark and Sweden, as Germanic countries) 6. Land of Lords (Poland—where every citizen is a lord, though none of these lords, apart from those who are not citizens, wants to be a subject).

Russia and European Turkey, both of largely Asiatic stock, would lie outside Frankestan: the first of Slavic, the second of Arab origin, from two original races which once held their dominion over a larger part of Europe than any other people, and kept it in the condition of a legal constitution without any freedom—that is, where no-one is a citizen.⁶²

In some ways, the reflections of Kant's imaginary Turkish traveller confirms the rationally inferior, sensually enslaved, despotic and freedom-threatening associations we have already seen in Kant's "Mohammedans" elsewhere. Kant's curious footnote, first of all, offers the most visible example of how his philosophy is topographically structured—of how a Slavic/Mohammedan Orient is used to define and designate a very European space of freedom and self-reflection (given the fact that, many years earlier in the *Observations*, Kant had already defined the German as someone who "asks how people might judge him", p. 105, one could see the passage as an exercise in the thinker's own national character). The despotism of the Russian and the Turk, "both of largely Asiatic stock", surrounds the *Grenzen* of Frankestan, a dormant though by no means extinct threat (Kant's hometown, we should recall, had seen the occupying armies of Peter the Great barely thirty years previously). This conflation of Russian and Mohammedan Orients is by no means new, and there is certainly an analogous anxiety in Kant's various references to Russia—in the first section of *Anthropology* we find him deliberating upon whether "the vast extent of the Russian Empire" merits the term "monstrous" (p. 146), whilst a 1790 piece entitled *Fanaticism and the Means Against It* begins with a revealing analogy to "Russian influenza" which a few years earlier "had spread so quickly around the world".⁶³

There is, however, a certain tension in the way this essentially European spirit of critical inquiry and self-consciousness is extended hypothetically (and denied actually) to the Turk. Although Kant's example is negative—the passage footnotes the futility of using popular maxims as a basis to understand the character of nations—Kant's adoption of the term *Frankestan* places civilized Europe in an explicitly subordinate position, in the faintly Adamic posture of allowing oneself to be named, and even recalls a time in the not too distant past when "a large part of Europe" was under foreign dominion. Of course, Kant's brief gesture here belongs to an established eighteenth-century tradition of imaginary Oriental viewpoints, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* and others. Moreover, the examples Kant

gives for his fictitious Turkish traveller suggest that even if there were such a thing as Turkish anthropology, it would be a superficial, vague, inaccurate affair, another example of how the Mohammedan is unable to grasp anything beyond the surface. And yet, the notion that Turks may consider and compartmentalize us in much the same way we do them, noting the “imperfections” of their Western neighbours, offers an ironic comment on Kant’s own book on physical geography, given the standard three-adjective descriptions he repeatedly gives to races himself (Arabs are “upright, serious and passionate”, Turks are “well-built, hospitable and kind”, etc⁶⁴). It is, moreover, difficult to discern from the passage whether there is, on Kant’s part, an anxiety or a delight at the thought of being looked at. What begins as a playful speculation on the Turks’ interest in other cultures ends, somewhat suddenly, in a dismissal of them as despotic. The abruptness of the shift from sophisticated traveller to despot, it would seem, does betray a subdued moment of panic on Kant’s part, as the author tries to qualify the ‘Europeanness’ of the Turks (their past superiority and dominion over Europeans) with a reminder of their Asiatic disregard for freedom.

Kant’s reflections, in some respects, also indicate a distant, unconscious application of the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative (“Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”⁶⁵). Towards the end of a book on anthropology, Kant has to wonder what it would be like to be, so to speak, ‘anthropologized’. This most curious of moments, where Kant Orientalizes his gaze and turns his Europe into a Frankestan, perhaps actualizes the implicit empathy required in Kant’s famous maxim—to practise anthropology, in this sense, would at least briefly necessitate some reflection on what it would be like to be the subject of such a study.⁶⁶

This brief consideration of a “Mohammedan” viewpoint, as we have already seen in Luther and Leibniz (and which will manifest itself most radically in Nietzsche’s desire to spend two years in the most Islamic part of Tunisia) is both strategic and self-subverting. It is tied to self-knowledge and self-affirmation, and yet it constantly risks radically decentering the very subject it seeks to preserve, turning the speaker’s culture into just another tribe on the planet, just another creed amongst many. When Luther complains how Muslims treat the Bible the same way ‘we’ treat the Torah, the subversion of his own faith’s centrality is unintentional; by the time we reach Leibniz—and his speculations on what the pagans would have said about the Christians if their books had been preserved—we see a more anxious awareness of the disparity between how we are and how we appear, and the emerging possibility (which Nietzsche understood all too well) that the essence of who we Germans/Europeans/Christians really are may only be glimpsed from the outside.⁶⁷ The aim inherent in Kant’s fictitious Turkish travellers here is by no means as explicit, and yet the passage is still remarkable for its latent externality; with its Turkish renaming of Poland and England, it constitutes one of the few moments in Kant’s oeuvre where

the Orient is allowed to gaze back, and indeed name what it gazes upon. Kant's dispatching of this remark to the footnotes demonstrates again the reservations Kant had in writing about any Christian subjection, real or metaphorical, to "Mohammedan" hegemonies.

The three-page description of Islam we find in *Physical Geography*, in many ways, underscores the ambiguous place of anthropology in Kant's *Gesamtausgabe*, both contributing to but also questioning the general position of Islam and the Islamic Orient in his work. A great deal of Kant's knowledge concerning Islam—in particular, his descriptions of Mecca and the Holy Kaaba—was taken from the "excellent" (*vorzüglich*) text of another German traveller and Orientalist, Carsten Niebuhr's *Beschreibung von Arabien* (1772). Although Niebuhr's descriptions of Arabs and Arab culture clearly belong to the century which produced them, there is an emphasis on fairness and a cautious unwillingness to generalize ("I cannot draw conclusions about the mentality of a whole nation from the behaviour of a few bad people"⁶⁸) which does not reproduce itself very often in Kant's boxed, brief, sweeping abstractions of continents and landmasses. Given Kant's own definition of illusion, that of a mistaking of one's subjective knowledge of an object to be the thing itself, there are surprisingly few moments of self-doubt in *Physical Geography*. They certainly take place—Kant happily reports his mistrust of the "terrible Portuguese" who "in their accounts fill the inner regions of Africa with cannibals and man-eaters",⁶⁹ or the inaccuracies in Macartney's descriptions of China which have only "put fantastic stories into circulation" (*ibid.*, p. 232), although this skepticism does not appear to be extended to the Middle East—on the contrary, Kant affirms the military presence of the French in Egypt as having contributed to our increased knowledge of the culture (*ibid.*, p. 233). Like Luther and Leibniz, Kant is aware of the defamations Mohammed has suffered in the West, and to some extent his brief description of Mohammed's life attempts to acknowledge this:

Mahomed, who was born in Mecca, married a rich widow, Hatice. He had his confidential dealings [*seinen vertraulichen Umgang*] with the angel Gabriel in a cave under Mecca. He blamed Jews and Christians for falsifying the Holy Scriptures. Gave his Koran out piece by piece. Ali, Osman and Abubekr were soon his new converts. Of these Osman improved the Koran. Mahomed was passionate, eloquent, handsome. His style of writing was so effective, that he often argued for the validity of his message on the grounds of the beauty of his style.

He acknowledged, he could work no miracles. However it is imputed to him, that he split the moon into two pieces, that a leg of lamb warned him not to eat it, because it was poisoned. Many deceptions are imputed to him, which however are not true. After the death of Hatice he married Ayse, a daughter of Abubekr. Of his journey through the seven heavens. The people of Medina began to follow him, and he fled

there from persecution, which he suffered from the government of Mecca. This flight of his forms a special era for Mohammedans, which begins with the year 622 after Christ's birth.

He married his daughter Fatima to his cousin Ali. He commanded the face during prayer to be turned towards Mecca. He overthrew Mecca and conquered [*bezwang*] a large part of Arabia and died of poisoning, which he had eaten with his leg of mutton. The area around Mecca is holy. The well of Zemzem. All Mohammedans go there on pilgrimage or should at least send someone to go in their place.⁷⁰

When we recall Kant's earlier references to Mohammedan paradises, fanatical zeal and the possible mental instability of its Prophet, this passage, though by no means free from prejudices, certainly offers a more sober account of the rise of Islam. A certain vein of sarcasm ("confidential dealings") is unmistakable and suggests a more cynical version of events, even if the charismatic and creative figure which emerges has a definitely Romantic air, more akin as we shall see to Goethe's "extraordinary" poet-prophet and Herder's "glowing imagination" than the fanatical zealot we encountered in "Illnesses of the Head".⁷¹ The description of the Koran itself as an aesthetically admirable text lies in stark contrast to what Hume had called "that wild and absurd performance", and again seems to have discounted any tales of *houris* or voluptuous afterlives Kant had been willing to entertain in the second Critique.⁷² Purged of the sensual and fanatical, Kant's Spartan paraphrase stands out in contrast to the rather more lavish and detailed descriptions offered in the same section of Mohammed's grave, "consisting of four thousand lamps, surrounded by a silver railing, with gorgeous fabrics hung on the wall on all sides, some of them studded with diamonds, which are presents from Mohammedan princes" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 9:398). Such details are not merely an attempt to reinforce some form of implicit association with a Catholic shrine, but also constitute a concrete reminder of the fact that the founder of Islam, unlike that of Christianity's, is dead and buried. The unadorned, no-nonsense style of Mohammed's biography diminishes Islam not by inflating it with allegations of depravity, insanity and excess, but on the contrary by 'normalising' it with the repetition of banalities (who Mohammed married, who his son-in-law was) or the detached reporting of the ridiculous (a talking leg of mutton, a journey through the seven heavens). The empty balloon of "Mohammedan" *Schwärmerei* is punctured by this quotidianizing historicization of the faith's origins. The absence of any reference to Mohammed as a national hero, the fact that Kant makes little mention of what Hegel and other Romantics were so impressed by—the lightning expansion of Islam, what Kant himself had elsewhere called "a great adventure"—underlines Kant's main aim in this section: to reduce Islam to three paragraphs in a book, to expose the origins of a proud faith as the workings of a small, feudal cult, engineered by a gifted, charismatic leader with delusions

of grandeur. A devotion to the description of the merely empirical, in this sense, becomes a tool whereby the actual origin and development of a rival faith can be historically recorded, dispassionately observed, mimetically contained.

In a sense, this is what *Physical Geography* tries to do—contain the world's cultures, comprehend and control the “wholly different world-view of the Orient”, keeping the richness and threatening variety of the foreign safely within the boundaries of the anthropological. Like the hypothetical Turkish traveller, Kant himself employs language—the vocabulary of empirical observation, bolstered with the occasional reference to a Tournefort, Niebuhr or Wahl—to prepare a space for the non-European other, without having it spill out of control. For this reason, *Physical Geography* can be seen as an extended footnote to the rest of Kant's work—a “merely” empirical place, a four-hundred page “appendix”—where the thinker appears to exhibit a relaxing of the concern for boundaries he had displayed elsewhere. In contrast to those savage Arab Bedouins in *Perpetual Peace* who “regard their proximity to nomadic tribes as a justification for plunder”,⁷³ we learn in *Physical Geography* how “their robbery on water and on land may be excused” (*Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 398); descriptions of Shi'ia (Persian) Islam are given intentionally Protestant echoes (“Good works are, according to their teaching, signs of grace, but they do not earn blessedness”, *ibid.*, p. 396); even the story of Islam is somewhat more soberly reported, eschewing references to lunacy, fanaticism and erotic paradises. Over several pages within a single volume, Kant writes more about Islam and its Orient than in all the other twenty-seven volumes of the *Gesammelte Schriften* put together.

Towards the end of his essay “On Fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*) and the Means against It” (1790), Kant writes how the only suitable response to the proliferation of unscientific speculation and pseudo-mystical ignorance is a “contemptuous silence” (*verachtendes Stillschweigen*).⁷⁴ Kant's tacit dismissiveness—the use he made of the footnote and the margin to control his references to “Mohammedanism”, to carefully locate it in such a way that whenever it did appear, its (ferce, sensual, fanatical, monstrous) Otherness would always advance his own project—explains the absence of any significant reference to the Muslim faith and its cultures in his work. This means, in other words, that Kant nurtured just as much contempt for Islam as Luther had, even if it was a *Verachtung* he chose to express through omission and dismissal, rather than invective and diatribe. Non-representation, not misrepresentation, represents the Kantian approach to the “Asiatic” threat of the “Mohammedans”; reduction, rather than exaggeration, is ultimately what distinguishes Kant's Muslim Orient from that of Luther's. This is not merely a question of declaring how, after Freud, we have learnt to consider footnotes differently, even if this is particularly true in the case of Kant and his ‘mere’ appendices; nor is it simply a point of remarking, once again, how the eighteenth-century project of modernity

had its origins in a very European desire for separation, had its conditions in the very non-European it chose to reject. Kant's concern for limits—mental, geographical, social, moral—guides his every reference to the Muslim Orient, from the desire not to mention Turkey too often in everyday conversation to the sublime imagination he was so keen to associate with it. The Kantian fear of Islam, in the end, is a fear of the swarm—of the unchecked, proliferating imagination and the multitude of images it brings with it, of the limit-transgressing anarchy of *Schwärmerei* and the violence it can inflict upon the order of reason. The paucity of attention Kant showed towards Mohammed and “Mohammedanism”, ultimately, represented the most comfortable way of keeping those “swarms” outside the ordered, free, rational space of his philosophy.

3 Herder's Arab Fantasies

Alas, the claims Kalligone had to unjustly struggle with! This stuff nowadays is called in so many journals *Kritik*, and is the order of the day. All the young Kantians, Fichtians, Schellingians, etc, etc, recite this Koran, sent from heaven and whispered into the Prophet's ear.

—Herder to Gleim, June 13, 1800¹

For all its amusement, Herder's image of Kant as the false, albeit charismatic Prophet, seducing a young generation of vulnerable souls with his critical revelations, carries with it a certain sadness. The picture it presents of the resentful, fifty-six-year-old philosopher who, in his own lifetime at least, never managed to outdo his former teacher, strikes a melancholy note; Nietzsche's "sore and unfree thinker", who never felt he could "sit at the banquet of the actual creators"², springs most immediately to mind in reading Herder's slightly self-righteous picture of Kant as a Prussian Mohammed, establishing a new creed of *Vernunft* with his Koran of Pure Reason.

In observing his former professor's rising star from the autumnal calm of his Weimar study, Herder clearly felt a new religion was about to bloom. Kant, it should be said, was not the only person in Herder's letters to be credited with the status of Mohammed—at various points during his correspondence, Herder employed the metaphor to describe his wife, his friend (Lavater), the poet Klopstock (whose odes had "an almost Mohammedan boldness" about them³) and, most significantly, Hamann. "Old, pure Prophet", he writes to his mentor in 1784,

read [my *Ideen*] with patience and care . . . reward me with a response, however it may be, from your dear breast! . . . You'll say your thoughts to me and that will move me nearer to you and also give me some encouragement in my courtship of your favour. Mahomed starts a surah in his Koran: Praise be the Merciful God; he has given the feather pen to mankind; may he give it to you too!⁴

The young Herder, as is well known, had been a student of both Kant and Hamann at Königsberg, and significant swathes of scholarship have been devoted to which of the two stars—*Aufklärung* or *Sturm und Drang*?—managed to exert the greatest influence on Herder's own planetary course.⁵ This juxtaposition of two Mohammeds, however—one a cunning deceiver, the other a "pure" source of aid and inspiration—is not merely of biographical interest, another handy reference for Herder scholars to colour the history of a familiar rivalry. Herder's two Prophets point the way to

something much more serious and much more complex in the thinker's own attitudes towards Islam, and the peoples and cultures he understood to be "Mohammedan".

The ebb and flow of Herder's critical reception, from his obscure status as Kant's pupil and Goethe's correspondent, the myth of his abhorrence for Enlightenment, the abuses his writings suffered at the hands of a variety of German nationalist thinkers, to the gradual recovery (thanks in no small part to Isaiah Berlin's influential study)⁶ and recognition of his status as an early thinker of tolerance, pluralism and ethnic identity . . . such a volatile critical heritage has culminated in an almost postmodern resurrection of the alleged 'father of nationalism' as the prescient critic of Eurocentrism and affirmer of non-universal, relatively valid value-systems.⁷ Even those scholars who stop short of invoking comparisons with Lyotard and Derrida, appear to agree on a figure who "abhorred all forms of cultural chauvinism" (Beiser), whose impulse to write history was driven by "a love of humankind" (Knoll) and whose writings constitute "an oasis of tolerance and humanity" (Adler).⁸

There is certainly nothing false about such descriptions. Herder's early critique of European self-congratulation ("Why should the western corner of our hemisphere alone possess culture?"⁹) is indeed remarkable, as are his attacks on imperialism and clannish provincialism; unlike Leibniz, Herder never desired an 'Egyptian Plan', not from the Portuguese or anyone else. The fact is, however, that the much-vaunted claims for Herder's humanity, pluralism and (arguably) prescient cultural relativism require some important qualifications. Most scholars are happy to remind us how Herder chastised Winckelmann and Shaftesbury for judging Egyptian culture by Greek/European standards instead of Egyptian ones—few, however, dwell on exactly how Herder expressed this ("The boy's coat is certainly too short for the giant"¹⁰). Herder's emphasis on the childishness of the Oriental, his negative representation, at times utter demonization of the Turk, his Protestant reservations towards not only Islam but also "the barbarity of Papism" (*die Barbarei des Papismus*¹¹) serve to remind us that we are dealing with not a single, magically coherent human being, but a varied and inconsistent collection of texts. As we have already seen with Kant and Leibniz, Islam—and Herder's ambiguous attitude towards it—will once again play a crucial role in this problematization of the place of the non-European in his work.

Like Kant, Herder was a voracious reader of travelogues and *Orientalia*, even if critics have rightly acknowledged the difficulty of ascertaining *exactly* the sources for his understanding of Islam.¹² The lively and varied context of Herder's writings, set against the unfolding developments in Arabic and Persian studies of the second half of the German eighteenth century, presents his somewhat sympathetic treatment of the Muslim Orient as unusual but by no means without precedent. The travelogues Herder had to rely on ranged quite widely from the blatantly biased 'travellers' tale'

to the more measured account which, if not free from a European perspective, at least attempted some form of objectivity. On the one hand there was Shaw's *Travels* (1738), an Anglican chaplain's account of North Africa and Arabia which, for all the interest and merit of its physical descriptions, essentially saw Arabs as synonymous with 'thieves' ("there is no name peculiar to anybody of them, they being all the same, and have all the like inclinations. . . of robbing, stripping and murdering"¹³)—Herder had read and reviewed a German translation of the text favourably in the 1770s. On the other hand, there were slightly more thoughtful observations from figures such as Herder's correspondent, Carsten Niebuhr, whose *Descriptions of Arabia* (1772), as we have just seen, at least allowed for the possibility of Eurocentric generalizations. Certainly, Sir William Jones's own positive remarks on the Arab in his late essay ("their eyes are full of vivacity, their speech voluble and articulate, their deportment manly and dignified"¹⁴) would have appeared around the same time as Herder's own idealizations of the Arab. Travelogues apart, Herder's writings would also have come onto the scene in the aftermath of a particularly crucial debate amongst German Orientalists concerning the status of Arabic. Scholars such as the brilliant Leipzig Byzantinist Johann Jacob Reiske had been vigorously attacking the essentially pristine and unchanging language proposed by scholars such as Schultens and Michaelis (the latter had written of the difficulty of finding "a *Volk* whose customs have remained unchanged so long as the Arabs"¹⁵). Throughout the 1750s, Reiske had demonstrated a remarkable awareness of the dangers and blindnesses involved in the European interpretation of Arabic texts: "What would we say to a Mohammedan, who without knowing our theology in its widest extent, made a translation of the New Testament, and then poured his philosophical sludge over it?"¹⁶ Men such as Reiske, for all their flaws, were remarkably aware of how easily European Arabists might end up reading something which, ultimately, was nothing more than a "Christian Koran" (ibid.). Indeed, Herder's own hermeneutic approach owes no small part to the radical, context- and culture-sensitive methodology of Reiske, whom he cites repeatedly in the *Adrastea*.

Herder's references to Islam sprawl. Aside from the few places in his oeuvre where it takes centre stage—the middle chapters on Arabia and the Crusades in the *Ideen*, the small 1792 essay on Saadi and an extended section on Arab culture in *On the Effect of Poetry on the Morality of Peoples*—we see a whole dizzying array of references to the Muslim Orient, ranging from a passing mention of Turkish tragedies (1765) to a footnote on the Arab origins of European love poetry in the posthumous *Adrastea* (1804).¹⁷ The range of registers also varies widely. Sometimes Herder is dry and academic—a comment on how 'Turks and Saracens' copied Greek philosophy and thereby lost their spirit, for example, or a reference to the Arab lexicographer who counted four hundred words for 'misery'.¹⁸ Sometimes he is self-mocking and light-hearted—as in when, in a letter to Hamann, he calls himself a Turkish camel driver, or addresses the Orientalist Carsten

Niebuhr in another correspondence as his ‘Hadschi’ (fellow Muslim pilgrim)¹⁹; at other times Herder can sound conventionally Christian (in *Die Ausgiessung des Geistes* we learn how “Mahomed converted through sword and fire”²⁰) or, in yet other moments, quite passionate and Romantic in the most secular sense of the word—there are numerous positive references to Mohammed’s dreams, imagination, inspiration or stories where the Prophet gives life to leafless trees.²¹ The cultural constitution of Islam also varies from reference to reference in Herder. Although it is predominantly seen as an Arabian phenomenon, Herder sometimes blends Turks and Arabs together (in *Auch Eine Philosophie* the Arabs who [allegedly] burnt the library at Alexandria, the tenth-century Arabs who reintroduced Greek philosophy to the West and the Turks who conquered Constantinople are all lumped together as ‘the same barbarians’²²), and sometimes even produces such phrases as “the Koran of the Turks”.²³

Scholars looking for some form of chronological progression in all of this will be frustrated. To a very limited extent, one could argue for a gradual refining of Herder’s view of the Koran—if in 1766 it is a ‘mishmash’ of different religions, by the time of the *Ideen* (1786) it has become merely ‘a peculiar mixture’.²⁴ Such gestures are undermined, however, by some genuine difficulties: Herder’s positive account of Mohammed and the rise of Islam in *On the Effect of Poetry* (1778), where the Koran is described as being full of “divine places” (*erhabene Stelle*),²⁵ is much less ambiguous than his treatment of it in the *Ideen* eight years later. Moreover, the simple contiguity of Herder’s positive and negative references to ‘Mohammed-aner’—in the same decade, sometimes in the same year—discourages the attempt to chart any form of progression or development in his ideas. The fact that Herder’s earliest reference to Islam (1765) is a complaint about the present, didactic state of German drama, obsessed with Christian caricatures of Mohammed, whilst one of Herder’s last letters ends “I write as a profaner, a blind pagan and a Turk”,²⁶ quickly sinks any notion of a gradually maturing response to Islam in his work. Instead of simply asking “What did the historical personage Herder *really* think about Islam?” it might be more pertinent to ask: what voices did Herder use when he wrote about the Muslim Orient? What kind of vocabularies did these different voices employ? How far did these various vocabularies overlap with one another? What manner of conflicts did they create?

HERDER THE PASTOR AND THE ENEMIES OF RELIGION

Whoever knows of the blindness and misery of the pagans, even if only through traveller’s reports and old tales, will realise with deep respect what a blessing the Christian religion is for the state and sciences, for the good of the citizen and the heart of men.

—*Die Ausgiessung des Geistes*²⁷

It would be wrong to try and isolate Herder's Christian faith, or to pretend it lay in some non-porous part of his psyche, detached and independent from the rest of his person. Herder's Protestant Christianity, far from being some form of sidelined, 'closet' identity, constitutes the very kernel of his thought—it expresses itself in his nationalism in his essay on Luther as 'Teacher of the German Nation', in his philology in his work on Biblical hermeneutics, in his understanding of history as "the great book of God which transcends worlds and times",²⁸ certainly in his reservations towards the Enlightenment as "a century which hates nothing more than what is miraculous and hidden".²⁹ With regards to Islam, however, there are a number of contentions Herder returned to again and again, objections which even in moments of praise and vindication he did not relinquish. They are three in number: the (self)deception of Mohammed, the violent nature of Islam and the faith's origins in Christianity. In an early passage (Herder is barely twenty-one) we see the most explicit expression of these familiar objections. Between Islam and Christianity, writes Herder, lies "a difference as wide as heaven":

When the enemies of religion set the quick expansion of Mohammed's teaching against the spread of our own church, it's clear to us they prefer to remain blind. Mohammed converted by the sword and with fire; the Apostles not with human weapons, but by proof of the spirit and its [holy] power. The former made his religion into a mishmash of all religions, so he could pitch it at everyone [*um sie bei einer jeden einzubetteln*].³⁰

"The enemies of religion" . . . written a good decade before the Arabs become a *Volk* of poetry lovers and a model for national consciousness, we have to wonder if this phrase for Herder ever really went away. Herder's later appreciation for the creativity of Mohammed and the nation-gathering tone of his achievement forced him to tread a difficult path between the condemnation of a false creed and a spectacular act of political, and of course poetic, imagination. In the preceding passage the term *mishmash* merely indicates a lack of imagination on Mohammed's part, or at the very best a sterile act of cunning. The remark underlines the predictable belief Herder held all his life—that Islam, in particular its "subtler aspects", was a faith indebted to Christianity, and without which it would never have existed in the first place.³¹ Twelve years later, in *On the Effect of the Art of Poetry* (1778), we find a description of the Koran almost completely stripped of any explicit Christian commentary, so engaged does the pastor from Riga become in the relationship between politics and aesthetics:

His Koran made such an impression on [the Arabs], because it contained so many sublime places; it couldn't, therefore, have been anything other than heaven-sent. Mohammed appointed himself on this basis and challenged all to competition: because he excelled [all around

him] in poetry, he also became triumphant in religion, so strong was his belief in the divinity of poetry.³²

Of course, the Christian subtext is still there—the Koran is an untruth, but now a wonderfully poetic and politically effective untruth. The absence of any reference to ‘deception’ or ‘mishmash’ however, deserves attention, despite the obvious use of reported speech. In an essay concerned with a primarily socio-political question—how poetry can affect and inspire consciousness and morality in different cultures—Herder downplays any possible Christian interjections in order to focus on his main point: the political effectiveness of Mohammed’s aesthetics. There even lurks a half-legimitation of Mohammed’s success in Herder’s reference to the Prophet’s conviction of the Godliness of *Dichtkunst*. What enabled Herder to override his Christian reservations against the religion of ‘sword and fire’, against the ‘mishmash’ of the Koran, so easily? Between the two passages lies, indeed, a difference as broad as the heavens: Mohammed the cunning salesman, the bric-a-brac hawker of a patchwork faith, becomes the sublime poet, furthering his message not through violence but verse. For all our emphasis on the centrality of Herder’s faith in his thought, there certainly appears to be moments where Herder is willing to diminish, even muffle his Christian identity in order to allow a more secular project to emerge. Herder himself acknowledged there were ‘warm’ and ‘cold’ ways of writing history, the coldest histories being the ‘cleverest’, those which, akin to Machiavelli, “measure out the result of given forces and, moving forward, calculates a plan”.³³ Perhaps the wholly positive account of Islam he gives in *On the Effect of the Art of Poetry* was one such ‘warm’ history, a piece of glowing Orientalism, one for which his own Christian feelings had to be sufficiently cooled. This process, like all processes, is variable. Ten years later, in the *Ideen* (1784–1787), we find the beginnings of a return to a less positive, more ambiguous, ‘colder’ description of Mohammed’s revelation:

His Koran, this peculiar mixture of poetry, eloquence, ignorance, cleverness and arrogance, is a mirror of his soul, which shows clearer than any other Prophet’s Koran his gifts and failings, his inclinations and mistakes, the self-deception and the resourcefulness with which he deceived himself and others.³⁴

It is a sentence which illustrates, more than any other passage in Herder’s oeuvre, the tensions within Herder between the Romantic and Christian perspectives on the phenomenon of Islam he was trying to analyse. Imaginative, yet somehow false; gifted, yet somehow cunning; beautiful, yet somehow wrong. When we follow the two-page description of Mohammed in the *Ideen*, and its emphasis on the eloquence, physical beauty (“a youth of beautiful form”³⁵) and powerful imagination (*gluhend* . . .

Phantasie) of the Prophet, we realize that an aesthetic acknowledgment of Islam's power was the only point on which Herder's Protestant and early Romantic vocabularies could come together naturally with very different motivations. In the description of Mohammed's achievements, something resembling a tone of *apologia pro vita mahometis* seems to creep in. If the main aim of the section on Mohammed in *On the Effect of the Art of Poetry* is to illustrate how poetry can be used to give people an identity and gather them together, in the *Ideen* Herder seems to be showing, in his remarks not only on the Prophet's gifts but also his "[morally] transparent life" (p. 421), how inevitable (and therefore understandable) Mohammed's conviction of divine inspiration was. In this ambiguous picture of an impressively creative, morally sound yet ultimately misguided individual, the pastor and the poet appear to find an uneasy compromise.

HERDER THE ANTI-PAPIST

The disparities between the three significant descriptions of Islam Herder gives us (1766, 1778, 1786) highlights developments not merely in his attitude to Islam, but also towards Catholicism and the history of his own Christian faith. If in the earliest passages, Islam's conquest through 'sword and fire' is unfavourably juxtaposed against the spread of Christianity ('our church') through the "evidence of the holy spirit",³⁶ twenty years later in the *Ideen* a very different picture emerges:

Unfortunately, [in Islam's conversion of its neighbours] Christianity was also included, which of all the religions had been the first to impose its faith upon foreign lands as a necessary condition of blessedness; only [this time] the Arabs did not convert through women, monks and illicit trade, but rather . . . with sword in hand and with the exacting cry: 'Convert or pay tribute!'³⁷

Frauen, friars and bootleggers . . . the cynicism is remarkable—or perhaps not so remarkable, given the fact that 'our church' has now become 'their church', and also bearing in mind the generally low esteem Herder held both European Catholics and Middle Eastern Christians in (the latter, we are told in the *Ideen*, are a "contemptible race . . . not worthy of the crosses on their churches", p. 423). Clearly, an altogether more skeptical view of the spread of religious faith is present here, even if Herder's abiding belief in the inscrutability of the divine drama's "wisdom and knotty plot"³⁸ would be able to accommodate all manner of explanations for the success of Christianity. What is also noticeable, however, is a very Protestant *Distanzierung* from the abuses of an increasingly Catholic/Orthodox past, a determinedly Lutheran redescription of Islam's

victories as having competed against “the corrupted traditions of Christianity” (p. 421). In the familiar praises sung of Herder’s willingness to critique the cruel histories of Christian nations, his denunciation of “every form of centralization, coercion and conquest” (Berlin, p. 158), this point is often overlooked. Herder’s resentment of the Crusades and imperialism springs not merely from his sense of humanity, but also in part from his Protestant identity; remarks such as “we Protestants do not want to undertake any crusade for fallen altars” or his reminder of how Pope Nicholas V gave permission to turn all unbelievers into slaves³⁹ suggest Herder occasionally viewed the colonial and militaristic abuses of Christianity as primarily Catholic, not Christian phenomena.

Ironically, although Herder’s Lutheran faith contributes to the reservations he had about Islam, it also played a different part in creating sympathetic inroads into his concept of the Muslim Other whenever Catholicism was brought into the equation. This happened in two ways: first of all, a very Protestant suspicion of representation, of Roman Catholic distortion and embellishment, drove Herder’s correction of medieval conceptions of Islam. He dismisses allegorical attempts to identify Mohammed with one of the four trumpets in Revelations 8:1–13 as “guessing-games” (*Ratselei*)⁴⁰; elsewhere, he goes into some detail to explain how “during the barbaric Middle Ages, every one knew Mohammed’s name was shortened, and how differently it is still written and pronounced”, even to the point of listing some of the variants.⁴¹ In his early *Parallels between Greek and French Tragedians*, Herder also complains of how “Papist barbarity” has created a popular theatre of “submissive stupidity”, one which does nothing but churn out didactic scare-puppets (*Schreckbilder*) of Mohammed and religious impostors.⁴² In all of these corrections, there is an abiding concern for the veracity of the image, one which should not be exaggerated into an empathy with the object of representation. A desire for *veritas* and a historicist’s impatience with hasty, uncritical abstractions drove Herder’s ultimately self-affirming criticism of such distortions.

Although Herder could never be called a Calvino-Turk—those sixteenth/seventeenth-century Protestants whose hatred of the Papacy helped them to see a potential ally in the Turk—there are certainly moments when Herder compares Islam with Roman Catholicism at the latter’s expense. While this never becomes quite as extreme as Luther’s position (who felt the Pope had “done more harm to the kingdom of Christ than Mohammed”⁴³), Herder does occasionally subscribe to that long Protestant tradition, stretching from Melancthon to Nietzsche’s “Peace with Islam, War on Rome”, of evaluating the Catholic Church severely through Islamic lenses. In reporting the intellectual and spiritual backwardness of Papal Rome, which is held almost single-handedly responsible for the ‘Barbary of the Occident’, the persistence of the Dark Ages and the synonymy of scholarship with ‘sorcery and blasphemy’,⁴⁴ Herder tells us:

In this I almost prefer Mohammed to the Pope and the Saracens to the monks. They truly sought out and encouraged the sciences out of a love of them . . . A Caliph or a Saracen certainly had more to overcome, if he truly loved the sciences, than a Christian or a Papist—and yet, to what a degree [the Arabs] surpassed them in everything they did! (Ibid.)

The 'almost' (*fast*) here provides an interesting moment of hesitation, not simply because it is negated in the subsequent passage (Herder clearly does prefer the Saracens to the monks), but also because it reveals an awareness on Herder's part of the provocativeness of the gesture. In his letters and playful similes elsewhere, Herder has no qualms about adopting Muslim identities (camel drivers, Mamelukes, *haji* pilgrims). Here, however, in moving from a European heresy to a non-European one, the 'almost' acts as a kind of token safety chord, preventing Herder's critique from wandering too far into the exotic in its search for an external vantage-point. It culturally anchors the passage, reminding the reader of its Christian provenance, and setting a scale on how far one can go—as far as cursing the Pope, but not as far as sympathising with Mohammed. Exactly how elastic this chord was, and how far it could be stretched, depended on what voice Herder was using at the time (barely two years earlier, Herder had described the Arabs as a 'savage people' to whom 'subtle abstractions' were wholly alien).⁴⁵ This evocation of Islam instead of Catholicism as an alternative paradigm or counter-reference to Protestant Christianity emerges again in Herder's ideas on education, where in a 1783 text we find the thinker urging geography masters to teach children what volcanoes, elephants and crocodiles are, and not merely 'dry' facts about German towns:

[for a child] to hear about Mohammed and the Mufti is more pleasant and essential than learning about the Pope and the Cardinals; a parliament of the Storks will please him more than the formalities of the Reichstag in Regensburg or the Law chambers in Wetzlar.⁴⁶

Herder's remark should not be exaggerated; he is hardly advocating the teaching of Islam in Prussian junior schools, but merely a more interesting and diverse geography syllabus. Mohammed and the Mufti will add colour, more than content, to a German education. And yet, once again, Mohammed displaces the Pope as a more relevant and desirable point of reference, a move which clearly forms part of Herder's much larger project of European decentring. Herder's mistrust of what he termed 'popery' clearly facilitated, though by no means solely explained, his gaze away from Europe towards a Muslim Orient he, in some moments at least, was happy to affirm and praise over and against its Catholic neighbour.

HERDER THE POET: FANTASIST, IDEALIST AND SEEKER OF RENEWAL

We have seen how Herder's Protestant faith, with its negative, anti-Papist underside, coloured and formulated his attitude to the Muslim Orient, sometimes pushing him to cynicism, sometimes to sympathy. The question now arises of how Herder's views of poetry fared within the framework of his ideas on Mohammed, Persians and Arabs. Inversely, this also means asking what kind of images of 'Mohammedan' religion and culture Herder summoned (and repressed) in order to articulate his views on poetry. Herder's belief in poetry as somehow standing in an essential relationship to life, in opposition to the dead, abstract language of philosophy, are crucial in understanding his at times hyperbolic eulogies of 'Oriental poetry'. Whenever Islam, Mohammed or Persians are mentioned in the context of poetry or artistic creativity, it is difficult to think of a single negative reference in Herder. From the early acknowledgment of genius being able to express itself in Turkish tragedies, the richness of the Arabic language in the *Treatise*, the utter idealization of the Arabs in *Essay on the Effect of the Art of Poetry*, his quasi-hagiography of Sadi, to the claims in the *Ideen* and the *Adrastea* that the Arab tradition almost single-handedly reinvigorated European poetry, Herder the poet seems to speak about the Muslim Orient in a language devoted to idealization.⁴⁷ In his adaptations from the poems *Sayings of Al-Halil*, even the normally vilified Turks and Huns, sultans and viziers are presented in a morally positive light.

In his attacks on the cosmopolitanism of the *philosophes*, Herder famously lampooned the "citizen of the world who, burning with love for his fellow ghosts, loves a chimera"⁴⁸; elsewhere, indeed, he had warned historians of the dangerously misleading abstractions which appear "when your head is full of a group you have fallen madly in love with".⁴⁹ And yet in many ways, the Arab for Herder was one such chimera. Whenever the subject was poetry or language, an impromptu halo was extended over them and their barbarism/thievery/unbelief/philosophical backwardness/bellicosity was either momentarily forgotten, paranthetically resolved or deferred into a mildly qualifying afterthought. A reference to "Turks, Arabs, streethieves and desert wanderers" in Herder's review of Shaw's travelogue⁵⁰ or the label of a "savage people" in *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul*⁵¹ appear around the same time as he is describing to us, in *On the Effect of the Art of Poetry*, how for the Arabs "language and poetry . . . were originally one", how their "noble freedom [was transformed] in turbans instead of crowns, and tents instead of cities", and how "their spirit of honour, chivalry and manly courage" constituted a national character which has remained "unchanged for millenia".⁵² When Herder the poet writes, it has to be said, the Arabs lose the rings in their noses and begin to speak in couplets.

In his thoughtful study on the place of Africa in Herder's thought, the critic Sonderegger tries to account for the 'ambivalence' of the representation of Herder's Africans (sometimes close to apes, sometimes victims, sometimes noble savages) out of a "need for a writing, which forces the dynamic thought train . . . into a temporal sign".⁵³ The problematic sequence of noble and brute, of savagery and sophistication thus becomes a kind of process, facilitating a rapprochement to the object of representation through this constant depiction of contrasts. This optimistic attitude towards the ambiguity of Herder's non-Europeans sees the variety of viewpoints and images we find in his writings as an incessant *Verarbeitung* or working out, rather than an irreconcilable plurality of different, jarring voices. Sonderegger, however, refrains from foregrounding that ineluctable polyphony in his study, a gesture Herder's varied and diverse oeuvre would seem to demand.⁵⁴

When Herder writes of poetry or language, Islam signifies life, energy, an explosion of power, an expansion of force on a variety of levels—militarily, linguistically, culturally, theophanically. The familiar concept of the Orient as the dawn/childhood/Eden of mankind, which Herder emphatically reiterates ("Morgenland, you rightly-chosen soil of God!"⁵⁵), the natural harmony of the camel-driving Arab with his surroundings, the "rich and pure and beautiful" language of Arabic and its crucial proximity to Herder's own fantasy of origins ("With what pleasure we dream through poetic narratives about this or that origin: here the first sailor, there the first kiss . . . here the first camel"⁵⁶) all contributed to fill Herder's Muslim Orient with an expansive vitality—an *elan* which he, unlike Kant, did not appear either to fear or to seek to contain. If Herder the pastor wanted to box and limit the 'Turkish religion' as an offshoot of Christianity and a mere mish-mash of previous traditions, Herder the poet had no qualms about relocating the most significant streams of European culture—poetry, philosophy, even aspects of our language—back to Arab roots. Herder's radical gesture distinguishes itself from the standard eighteenth-century Orientalist tropes of dawn and origin in the philological diligence and emphasis with which he worked out the consequences of such Oriental anteriority for the Occident. In the *Ideen*, drawing on a variety of Orientalists (Reiske, Pococke, Sale, Jones, Ockley), Herder goes into some detail explaining how the entire Romance tradition, its courtly love, knightly ballads and early 'novels' are "growths of [the Arabs'] language and way of thinking" (p. 453). Not stopping with Sicily or Spain, the text moves on to the troubadours, *Don Quixote* and even—through the meeting of Norman heroic sagas with "the finer chivalry of the Arabs"—into Germany and northern Europe. Risking anachronisms, there is an almost Nietzschean feel to this depiction of an Arab-Spanish love of life and its effect on Europe, one which will lend an irony to Nietzsche's own remark in *The Antichrist*, a century later, that Moorish Spain "is more closely related to *us* at bottom".⁵⁷ The critique of European inwardness Herder expressed in his regular references

to ‘this corner of the world’ or ‘our little continent’, coupled with his cynicism concerning the ‘abstracted name’ of European culture (“where does it exist? With which people?”⁵⁸) doubtless fed—and in equal measure sprang from—this awareness of the place of the foreign (*der Fremde*) at the very heart of so-called European culture. In this respect, Herder’s empiricism genuinely tried to dissolve the *Grenzen* Kant had so earnestly sought to preserve. The alleged universality of Christianity, so central to Herder’s compassionate humanism, never contributed as much to this process of boundary-dissolution as his belief in the energy of *Sprache*. Herder’s love of poetry, much more so than his religious faith, saw the simple movement of language as sufficiently subversive to problematize, and ridicule, the bloated, empty myth of ‘Europe’.

The powerful association in Herder’s texts of Mohammed and Arabia with life, imagination, seed and inspiration do bear some subtly negative consequences. Herder’s poetic celebration of the Prophet’s achievements, his insistence on the superior imagination and poetic gifts of the Arab, effectively turns the Koran into a long, impressive poem, an Arab *Ossian*. Islam, in turn, loses its truth-value and becomes a set of tropes. When Herder, in writing to his wife, is able to tell her how “your letters to me are like the chapters of the Koran, which the Angel Gabriel brought to Mohammed”,⁵⁹ we realize the aesthetic has become a space in which the thinker can neutralise the threatening assertiveness of Islam’s competitive revelation whilst retaining its form as a rhetorical tool and example. The enemies of religion have become the parodies of religion.

Herder’s commitment to the innate imagination, poetry and sublimity of the Arab mind (“the imagination of [the Arabs] . . . is adapted for the excessive, inconceivable and marvellous”⁶⁰), whilst favourably intended as a counterpoint to what Herder considered to be dry, rational, abstract thought, also effectively sidelines them from the status of serious, original thinkers—a mere ‘bridge’ of Greek science to Asia and later on, of course, Europe.⁶¹ It would be wrong to deny any development in this idea; Herder’s coarser remarks during the 1770s, concerning the Arabs as a savage people trying to deal with abstractions beyond their ken, do not persist into the next decade. Nevertheless whilst Herder, particularly in the later years of the *Ideen*, praised the Arabs as preservers and mediators of Greek thought, especially for their achievements in medicine and the sciences, the description of Arabia offered in *Auch Eine Philosophie*—“a subplot in the history of the formation of Europe”⁶²—still seems to linger on. Philosophers are described as often being poets, and basing themselves either on the Koran or Aristotle (p. 435); having never had a ‘free state’, Herder felt the Arabs were unable to produce any significant political thought or history—their *Geschichte*, we are told, “is either poetry or woven through with poetry” (p. 436).

On this point, defenders of Herder will cite his belief in the incommensurability of the historical moment (“no two moments in the world are the same”⁶³), his emphasis on the Heraclitean nature of the timeline and

chronology, not to mention the untranslatability of specific cultural instances (well-disciplined, patriarchal authority being misunderstood as Oriental despotism, for example), his belief that "the Negro, the [native] American, the Mongol has gifts and talents . . . that the European does not have".⁶⁴ And yet the continual organic metaphors of growth and expansion Herder offers for the human race (child/flower/bush/light) does belie a process which tacitly attributes, to such alleged incommensurabilities as the passion of the Arab or the innocence of the Negro, a very measurable value.

The price Islam and the Muslim Orient pays for the imagination, energy, privileged poetic gifts and early influence Herder credits it with is a permanently ancillary place in world history, a state of perpetual periphery. Herder's acknowledgment of Europe's debt to the Arab world ("the light of science came out of Arabia to darkest Europe"⁶⁵) bestows both an honour and a frozen primordiality upon the Arabs. What begins to emerge in Herder's thought—a development which will find its refined and systematized culmination in Hegel—is the unwitting beginnings of an episodization of Islam, a fixing of the Orient in a prearranged scheme of growth and development. Herder's chimeras ("The silent Arab spoke with the fire of his words as with the lightning of his sword", p. 433) have not changed with the passage of millenia. On the stage of world history Islam and Arabia, for all their sublimity, vigour, eloquence and power, have long since played their part.

HERDER THE NATIONALIST: EXEMPLUM-HUNTER AND TURCOPHOBE

Although the treatment of nation and nationhood in Herder's thought, in its complexity, certainly outstrips anything a term like 'nationalist' can convey—his interest in the formation of national identity visibly pervades his work on poetry, language and religion—there are good reasons for seeing a special relationship between Islam and the efforts Herder himself dedicated to the idea of a national consciousness. Just as Herder's Christian faith introduced a number of dilemmas into his aesthetic, historical and political approach to Islam and 'Mohammedans', Herder's attention to national identity—and in particular, the cultivation of his own—engendered an ambiguous relationship to the Muslim world, considered as a *topos* which was both a model for German identity and a threat to it.

We have already mentioned how the rise of Islam contained for Herder a number of important lessons for the formation of a *Volk*, particularly concerning the essential role of poetry and language in this process. As a student of history, combing the world's cultures in search of *exempla* for great national/ethnic consciousnesses of the past, Herder was explicit in his belief that the rise of Islam was an event German nationalism could learn from. In the rather Leibnizian *Idea for the First Patriotic Institute* (1788), we are

told how “Greek, Latin and Arabic” offered excellent examples of “what secret dominance a nation achieves” when it learns how to manipulate and command its language. In the *Ideen*, Herder goes into greater detail, to the point of lamenting how the Germanic tribes of Europe never possessed a text such as the Koran:

Whatever this religion may be, it was propagated through a language, which was the purest dialect of Arabia, as well as the pride and joy of the entire people; little wonder, then, that other dialects were pushed into the shade and that the language of the Koran became the triumphant banner for Arab world-domination. Such a common goal for a speaking- and writing-style is advantageous to an expanding, blooming nation. If the Germanic conquerors of Europe had had a classic book in their language, as the Arabs had their Koran, Latin would never have had sovereignty over their tongue, nor would so many of their tribes have gone astray. But now neither Ulfila nor Kaedmon nor Otfried could become, what Mohammed’s Koran still is to all his followers: a pledge to their old, genuine dialect, through which they elevated it to the most authentic monument of their tribe and through which they remain one *Volk* in the whole world. (pp. 431–32)

The faint tone of resentment evident in Herder’s repudiation of Latin begs the question: what did it mean for a German thinker, in the 1780s, to envy the Orient? The Chimera-like idealization Herder bestowed upon the Arabs, in this sense, becomes clearer when we recall the fragmented and diminished German space the thinker perceived himself to be living in. Herder’s resentment of ‘Gallicomanie’ or German imitations of French culture, the ‘retarded’ state of German language, the ‘disease of forgetfulness’ which plagued the Germans’ inability to recall their oldest traditions . . . all of these factors made Herder turn an envious eye towards the Arabs and the clear qualities of their national character.⁶⁶ This desire for a solid, national disposition—essentially an association of stereotype with strength—whilst certainly not justifying the clichés of the proud, vengeful, passionate, wandering Arab we encounter in the *Gesamtausgabe*, provides one factor in explaining why Herder, otherwise so opposed to unrealistic depictions of foreign cultures, adhered to his unreal, Chimera-like Arabs so persistently and idealized them so indulgently. Of course, Herder’s homage to the Koran also serves a subtly Christian purpose, that of completely secularising the phenomenon of Islam, transforming it from a divine revelation into a powerfully historical event. Within the subtext of Herder’s praise lies the definite and calculated disenchantment of a holy text.

In remarking how things would have been different had the ancient Teutons possessed a version of their own Koran, Herder’s gaze towards the Orient mixes envy with regret, whilst stopping short of politically locating the contemporary political hope of Europe in the example of Islam and the

Arabs. Although the Arab world in the *Ideen* is clearly seen as the reinvigorator of a Europe sunk in barbarity and sterility—in the final passage of the nineteenth book Herder states this quite explicitly—the political relevance of Islam seldom spills over into the present-day. Nine years earlier, in the *Essay on the Effect of the Art of Poetry*, Herder had come a little closer to this notion. Having described the rise of Islam as inextricably linked with the place of poetry in Arab culture, he expresses how desirable it would be if “some of the incense of the Oriental kind were to waft over towards Europe”.

Perhaps Europe is on the brink of a new period of influence from Arab poetry, if the treasures themselves, which still lie in Spain and elsewhere, awake and become one; I doubt however whether it can have a living effect on our character. Were this to happen, it would have to be the influence of a living *Volk*, in whom the art of poetry also lives. Libraries can produce very scholarly effects, illuminating moments, corrections and new tastes in this or that person, so that individuals may deservedly or undeservedly become famous. The effect of poetry on nations, however, which is what concerns us here, is something else entirely. (pp. 364–65)

Politically, as well as poetically and philosophically, the Muslim Orient is a source of life—if, in this case, an ultimately discounted one. In this very act of attributing a possible role to Arabia as an instrument of Europe's rejuvenation, as a provider of life to a confused and strife-torn continent, Herder also ultimately boxes it and pushes it outside the realm of the ‘living’, ontologically denying it any actuality. In one sense, of course, this simply reinforces what we have already said about the spectral-like quality of Herder's Arab fantasies, which possess no concrete existence in reality (Herder, as far as the diaries and letters show, having never met an Arab or a Turk, showed a disconcertingly positive faith in the accuracy of travel reports and tales throughout his life). It also suggests, however, that Herder himself was uncomfortably aware of the constructedness of his Orient—the fact that it only existed in libraries and travel reports, in chronicles and anthologies of poetry.

If the idealization of Herder's Arabs constituted a fantasy of life, regeneration and return to the origin, the demonized Turks we find in the *Gesamtausgabe* reflect something much more morbid in Herder's thought. The contrast between the two groups, which Herder sometimes lumped together as followers of Mohammed (or ‘Turks and Saracens’⁶⁷) and sometimes kept apart, is striking. This emerges most clearly in the section on “Alien Peoples in Europe” in the *Ideen*, where a glowingly positive account of the Arabs (described as our “Oriental brothers” whose acquaintance has been “fruitful for our continent”⁶⁸) is immediately followed by a brief paragraph on the Turks:

The Turks, a *Volk* originating out of Turkestan, are still alien to Europe despite their three hundred year old presence here . . . They have reduced the most beautiful kingdoms in Europe to desert and the once inventive Greeks to faithless slaves . . . How many works of art have been destroyed through their ignorance! Because of them, how much has been vanquished, never to be resurrected! Their Empire is an enormous prison for all Europeans who live within it; it will fall when its time comes. For what business do such aliens [*Fremdlinge*] have in Europe, who after a thousand years still want to be barbarians? (pp. 436–37)

The absence of any reference to Islam is striking, and we shall come to this in a moment. Before anything else, the most obvious point to make here is to underline the background presence of the Russo-Turkish wars (1768–1774, 1787–1791). Not quite as close as Luther and Leibniz's Vienna, the Tsarist struggles against the Ottomans in the Crimea and the Balkans were still closely followed by Herder. In a letter written from France in 1769, we find the traveller eagerly asking for news of (and responses to) "the excellent victories over the Turks". Herder is clearly delighted that "Russia's prospects couldn't be more glorious", with the "main army of the Turks beaten", the "Janissaries wiped out" and the Russian Fleet in the Black Sea.⁶⁹ Although Herder's humanity would occasionally express sympathy for their defeats—in the *Humanitätsbriefe*, in all fairness, the destruction by Tsarist troops of the city-port Ismail on the Danube he effectively labels a war crime⁷⁰—the Turk, alongside the Hun, remains one of the few genuine hate-objects in Herder's writings, a figure he never problematized for himself and whom he held curiously exempt from the criticism of demonization and ignorant misrepresentations he launched so often elsewhere.

The Russo-Turkish wars, however, cannot explain the entirety of Herder's enmity for *die Türken*. In his treatment of the Turk, there is the sense of something abyssal, a repressed horror at the utter gratuity of history's darker moments—and perhaps a much deeper, unarticulated anxiety on Herder's part concerning the possible emptiness of *Geschichte*. Herder described despotism as "the true consuming abyss for humanity, which swallows everything . . . into death and pulverizing".⁷¹ Despite the victories of the Russians, the Ottoman Empire was still an example to Herder of a successful, expansive and historically dynamic despotism. The roles Turks are given in Herder's writings, the manner in which he involves them, whenever possible, in the misfortunes he is reporting—be it the imprisonment of Sadi or the downfall of the Arabs (where Turks and Kurds are described as *Raubtieren* or 'scavengers')—underlines how emblematic they were for a kind of abiding evil in Herder's thought. There is a very Lutheran frustration here, one which Herder himself, having invested so much positivity elsewhere in Islam as a poetic/political phenomenon, was unable to resolve as Luther had, with an appeal to apocalyptic hermeneutics and a

demonization of 'Mohammedanism'. The fact that Herder sometimes saw them as Muslims (believing only divinity could have produced the Koran is seen as a "proof of the Turks" and "horrible nonsense"⁷²) and sometimes, as in the passage from the *Ideen*, as de-Islamified, merely pagan barbarians, does suggest that Herder simply did not know what to do with the faith of the Turks. However, a secularised form of the Turk's familiar apocalyptic role in the events of the Last Days is to be found in his work—not merely in the tell-tale prediction of Ottoman collapse found in the passage ("it will fall when its time comes"), but also much more powerfully in his final work *Adrastea*, where Herder's slavophilism expresses his hope for a restoration of ancient Hellas and a vanquishing of the Turk:

suppose we should return after some centuries. Russia would have found her centre along the Black Sea; her Asiatic as well as European provinces she would have made fertile . . . From the inarticulate heart of Asia the aorta of all trade routes would be opened; the Ottoman Porte [Istanbul] would no longer exist. The Mediterranean would be what it ought to be . . . the World's Freeport.⁷³

There are a number of threads wound up in this vision of a *pax slavica* stretching from the Crimea to Greece. Although not quite an *Egyptian Plan*, Herder's Romantic hopes for a re-Christianization of the Mediterranean—or, as the scholar Gesemann puts it, "shifting Petersburg onto the shores of the Bosphorus"—sees the European forces of light, culture and freedom overcoming those of tyranny and darkness (the Ottomans). The retaking, as Herder would see it, of Constantinople would form an almost eschatological condition of this project. The uncomfortably bipolar tone of the passage, drawing on Herder's famous understanding of history in the *Ideen* as the conflict and resolution of opposing forces, explains in part the animal/barbaric connotations of the Turk in Herder, its necessary separation from Islam and the Arab Orient (seen as a force of growth and culture), not to mention the remarkable absence of virtually any reference in Herder to Turkish poetry, music or Sufism (unlike Hegel's interest in Rumi). If Herder's Arab forms a primary, preparatory stage in the development of European art, then Herder's Turk signifies its opposite, the polar inverse of freedom, Culture's true Other. If Herder's Arab constitutes a fantasy of life, origin and regeneration, then Herder's Turk constitutes an equally powerful fantasy of evil, destruction and death.

The lessons and consequences inherent in Herder's noble Arab/evil Turk, in any history of Islam's place in German thought, emerge most clearly when we juxtapose Herder's fantasies concerning Islam alongside Kant's footnoting of the Orient. Certainly, Herder stands out after Lessing as the first major German thinker to view Islam as a phenomenon in its own right, and not merely as a theophanic aberration or a minor heresy. What the case of Herder also reveals, however, is exactly how ambiguous the benefits of

an empirically grounded historicism was for the non-European. If Kant's universalizing abstractions rendered the Muslim Orient largely transparent and inconsequential, Herder's Orientalist attention to detail merely displaced this inconsequentiality from the outer rim of a circle onto the lower rung of a ladder. Here, the lesser and greater evils of misrepresentation and non-representation blur together: if Kant's footnoting of Islam continues and reinforces a tradition of explicit Eurocentrism, Herder's sublime Arab and poet-prophet establishes (though by no means initiated) a German worship of the general Orient, one which would run into diverse streams such as Goethe, Schlegel, Nietzsche and Max Mueller. The Žižekan possibility that both of these paths are equally Eurocentric—Herder, like the postmodern multiculturalist Žižek has demonized as racist and patronising,⁷⁴ speaks from the same privileged, empty space to affirm his own superior, intrinsically European reflectivity or *Besonnenheit* in the very act of acknowledging the Other's non-Europeanness—should not detract from the prescience and value of Herder's critique. In the midst of half a dozen Muslim-Christian conflicts, Herder expressed contempt for European imperialism and sympathy for Muslim losses of life—our revision, and problematizing, of Herder's much-lauded pluralism should in no way make us forget this.

Herder's two Prophets, therefore—the Königsberg professor whose abstract, lifeless dogma of *Kritik* was already expanding like a world power across the German mind, and the fond figure of Hamann, to whom Herder appealed for wisdom and inspiration—reflect the inherent ambivalence within Herder's response to Islam and the cultures and peoples it represented for him. Forever shuttling between origin and oppressor, poets and profanity, life force and agent of catastrophe, the variety and contradictory nature of Herder's Muslim Orient reveals the patterns of interference between three different wavelengths, the shifting contours of a conflict between a series of different political, religious and aesthetic priorities. When, in the *Ideen*, we encounter the multifaceted description of Mohammed as "trader, prophet, speaker, poet, hero and lawmaker" (p. 420), we realize that Herder would never successfully synthesize his varied attitudes towards Islam. When, in the middle of the *Humanitätsbriefe*, amongst criticism of the Crusades, disgust at European designs to "plunder Mecca and Medina" and praise for those travellers who genuinely attempt to think like Arabs,⁷⁵ we encounter an approving description of Abbe St. Pierre as someone who "was especially hostile to the Mohammedan religion because it favours ignorance as a matter of principle and makes the people animalistic",⁷⁶ we realize that a repressed evangelical response to Islam, an irreducible Christian core, would never really leave the *Morgenland* Herder constructed for his readers. The different faces of Herder's Muslim Other—savage Turk, noble Arab, the Koran as mishmash or sublime tapestry, Europe's threat and salvation—constituted no progressive *Verarbeitung* but rather the persistent murmur of a collection of passionate, distinctive, ultimately discordant voices.

4 Keeping the Turks Out of Islam

Goethe's Ottoman Plan

The youth was handsome, and he had leaped forward just as the princess had seen him in the sport of tilting at a ring or some other suspended target. Likewise in riding contests, when he galloped past the image of a Turk's head on a post, his bullet struck the forehead, right under the turban. And also, with a quick dash forward, he could lift the Moor's head from the ground with his bare sabre. In all such arts he was skillful and successful.

—"The Fairy Tale" (1828)¹

The persistent inhumanity of the Turk in Goethe's work supplies a jarring refrain to the otherwise idealizing melodies Goethe composed for Islam throughout his long life. The sincerity and passion with which the poet devoted his genius to the careful cultivation of a particular *Islambild*—sublimity, eloquence, mystical resignation, spiritual contemplation—stands somewhat awkwardly alongside what Goethe had to say about his nearest Muslim neighbours. If Goethe the poet was happy to 'twin' himself with Hafiz, describe the Koran as a text which awakens "astonishment" and "veneration", and Mohammed as a man "seized and inspired by God"², Goethe the political commentator would always find it difficult to repress a contempt for "the common foe of Europe and Asia".³ If Benjamin, in his famous essay, could quote with approval Soret's remark on the poet's political schizophrenia ("Goethe is liberal in an abstract sense, but in practice he inclines towards the . . . reactionary"⁴), one wonders whether Goethe's oft-vaunted Islamophilia might not also be included in such a maxim. Indeed, Goethe's delight at the Russians' destruction of the Turkish fleet at Cesme, his absorbed and detailed prose descriptions of Hackert's painting of the event, his hopes for the reconquest of Constantinople and sadness at the Ottoman successes in the Balkans, not to mention his sympathetic remarks concerning Napoleon's conquest of Egypt and, perhaps more alarmingly, the half justification he makes for Bonaparte's execution of several hundred Ottoman prisoners in the campaign . . . the overwhelming negativity of such references, lying in the margins of Goethe's *Werke*, bring to light a near-complete compartmentalization of Islam in Goethe's rich and sophisticated responses to the Muslim Orient. In this respect, our chapter on Goethe will try to analyse some of the strategies and vocabularies Goethe had to employ in order to prevent his political misgivings concerning the Muslim world from interfering with the poetical and spiritual energy he was continually investing in it. This analysis, inevitably, will also have something to contribute to the more familiar debates concerning the essence of Goethe's

conservatism, the nature of his own Christian faith and his relationship to the whole question of colonialism.

Goethe differed from Herder in that his poeticization of Islam was much more a pacification; by removing the Turk out of Islam—and Islam from the Turk—Goethe was able to reconcile a very Kantian desire for the integrity of Europa with a Romantic cosmopolitanism, a devotion to *Weltliteratur* which saw national boundaries as limits to be transcended rather than enforced. However, in considering this rather pat separation of Islams in Goethe, this ideologically motivated distinction between an ‘evil’, actual, threatening Ottoman-Islam and the safe, aesthetic, idealized Arab-Persian Islam of the *Divan*, some caveats have to be supplied. To begin with, both sides of this distinction are fraught with some contradictory remarks. Goethe does have some complimentary things to say about Turks, even if the quantity is miniscule—amongst the two hundred or so references to bellicose Turks and ignorant, oppressive Ottomans within the poet’s overall *corpus*, the number of positive references can be counted on the fingers of one hand: an acknowledgment of how, in the most recent newspapers, Serbs and Turks have been able to live peacefully together,⁵ a declared willingness in one letter not to leave Turkish poets out of the *Divan*,⁶ a somewhat cynical recognition in one late review of the relatively tolerant atmosphere Constantinople’s Greeks enjoy under the Ottomans.⁷ Even if such remarks stand out as pinpoints of light against a general backdrop of animosity, they do show it was structurally possible for Goethe to write positively about Turks, even though he almost never chose to do so. Similarly, Goethe’s overall positive attitude towards Islam in general—its central tenets, he declares famously in the *Notes* to the *Divan*, “coincide more or less with our own faith”⁸—is not without its foibles and inconsistencies. The debate over Goethe’s central text in this respect, the *West-östlicher Divan*, would require a chapter of its own simply to document. If earlier critics such as Mommsen and Abdel-Rahim had spoken of Goethe’s “profound sympathy” for Islam and his role as a “pioneer in the new representation” of the faith,⁹ certainly a later generation of scholars, post-Said, would take a more critical approach towards the “pure Eastern air” Goethe yearned to breathe. Encouraged by Said’s various references to Goethe as one more poetical brick in the edifice of Orientalism, critics such as Wilson and Weber provided a more exacting interpretation of Goethe’s pieces, reading plays such as *Iphigenie* within a tradition of Orientalist *Türkenoper*, or seeing the *Divan* as a mere “fulfillment of an aesthetic programme”, an example not of Goethe welcoming the Other but rather projecting his gaze “onto the Same in the Other”.¹⁰ The fact that in an 1817 essay on sculpture, in the very middle of the *Divan* years, Goethe could write of the contempt of Mohammedans (*Mahometaner*—not Turks) for anyone who thinks differently than they do, and of their cruelty to European slaves, does suggest a strange multiplicity of registers in Goethe’s work.¹¹ Although there *is* a general sense of terrible Turks

and noble Arabs in Goethe's writings, such remarks, however infrequent, should instill in us a sense of caution.

Goethe's use of irony and humour in dealing with the Muslim world should also be borne in mind here. The most familiar examples of this—his references to himself as a "Pseudo-Mohammedan" (*Aftermahometaner*) or to his research as filling a treasure-chest with spoils¹²—are already well known, and resemble Herder's own joking descriptions of family and friends as prophets, camel-drivers and fellow pilgrims. There are moments when Goethe extends this playfulness to the Turk; in a letter to Cotta, complaining about printing errors in travel guides, we read how such travellers have suffered more at the hands of their printers than "from all the Greeks, Turks and Albanians put together".¹³ Although such quips are by no means redemptive or exonerating, they do at least indicate a crucial semantic awareness of the image of the Turk, even if (in Goethe's case) this image was more or less accepted by the writer who invoked it. Irony in the deeper sense of the word—not merely a semantic playfulness with such symbols, but also the suggestion of some form of critical distance towards them—should also be kept in mind when dealing with the anti-Turkish remarks in plays such as *Tasso* and *Götz von Berlichingen*. Even if the desire to liberate a Jerusalem on behalf of "the might of Christendom" or restore domestic peace so that the Reich may "finally fight against the Turks"¹⁴ expressed the playwright's own resentment of Ottoman power—for the Turks, encroaching on the borders of Christian Europe, linger with equal persistence in the margins of both plays, the devious power games of Antonio and the unjust treatment of Franconia's peasants do problematize simplistic readings of such remarks. There are limits, however, to what irony can reverse. The Greek ferocity of the passions described in the *Heldenlieder* (1823), where "Turkish blood is there to spill" and "no mercy" is shown "to the unbelievers", lie beyond the reach of even the most sympathetic readings.¹⁵

Political developments abroad—the Greek independence struggle against the Ottomans, the various Russian-Turkish wars which Herder had followed so closely, the continuing Ottoman occupation of the southern Balkans—also supply a mild qualification (though by no means justification) to Goethe's *Erbfeinden*. This is neither to idealize the Ottoman Empire nor to condone its eighteenth/nineteenth-century demonization in the European mind, but simply to acknowledge the existence of some historically understandable reasons for the wild, sporadic energy which Goethe sometimes expended on his hatred of the Turk. The Turkish targets and Moorish dummies Honorio practises on in "The Fairy Tale"—and the denial of humanity which conditions, underlies, indeed enables their depiction—was fed in part by Goethe's close observation of developments in the Balkans and the Middle East. By the 1820s, Eckermann tells us, Goethe was reading the newspapers on a regular basis for news of "the advances of the Greeks".¹⁶ There are two reasons, however, why simply citing *Türkenkriege* and the Ottoman oppression of Greeks and other insurgents are not sufficient in

themselves to explain Goethe's overwhelmingly negative picture of the Turk. The first reason, obviously enough, is that a number of favourable representations of Turks and Ottomans were already extant amongst Goethe's contemporaries, and often from writers who did not have nearly as keen an interest in Islam as Goethe. As we have seen, Kant (certainly no friend of the Ottoman Empire) paints a relatively benign picture of the Turks in his *Physical Geography* (1802). The dramatist Casparson, in his mourning-play *Osmann* (1776), whilst still indebted to the image of the Lustful Turk, at least offers a Lessingesque point of redemptive humanity in the Turkish protagonist's character.¹⁷ Even Byron, who actively fought against the Ottomans on behalf of the Greeks (and whom Goethe admired as "a second Lycurgus"¹⁸) was capable of praising "the universal [dignity] amongst the Turks" when he travelled there in 1805, and equally capable of inserting humane characters into his own "Turkish Tales".¹⁹

A second reason why the simple proximity of military conflict is inadequate in evaluating Goethe's cultural, moral and historical disparagement of the Turks lies in the whole variety of positive Turkish phenomena Goethe's "Oriental" research would have exposed him to. Probably the most significant factor in this regard is Goethe's interest in the work of the amateur Berlin Orientalist Heinrich von Diez, with whom Goethe enjoyed a late correspondence (1815–1816) and to whose texts the poet devoted a considerable amount of time and energy. Diez is important for two reasons; first of all, for the especially high regard and affection Goethe held him in. In the *Notes*, he writes of the "dignified man" to whom he "owed so much instruction".²⁰ It has been argued that after Hammer, Diez constitutes the most significant source of texts for the *Divan*, and that Goethe tacitly sympathised with the Berliner in the ugly and acrimonious dispute between Diez and Hammer which was taking place at the time (Goethe spent his January evenings in 1816 reading, amongst other things, Diez's enormous, four-hundred-page response to Hammer's criticisms²¹). More crucial to our own argument, however, is Diez's Turcophilia, the fruit of a six-year stay in Istanbul in 1785. Not only would Goethe have encountered in Diez's work a repeated sense of indignation at Europe's vilification of the Turk ("There has never been a dynasty and a nation more slandered by European writers than that of the Ottomans"²²), but he would also have been presented with a rich and sophisticated selection of Turkish and Ottoman history and culture. Although one would never have guessed this from the intellectually inferior, unreflective, tyrannical barbarians we later find in Goethe's writings on the Greek Fanariots of Constantinople, the two volumes of Diez's anthology Goethe reads in 1816 are filled with Turkish examples of history, cartography, Ottoman travel literature, studies of chronology and, by Diez himself, a Homeric comparative study of the Turkic epic "Oghuz". Little of this appears to have had any significant influence on Goethe's Turkish attitude, neither in the "common foe of Europe and Asia" we encounter in the *Notes*, nor in the desire to "drive the Turks out of Europe", which

Goethe expressed in letters and in conversation many times in later life.²³ It is as though Goethe read Diez's work with a kind of filter in his head, carefully selecting any poetical nuggets of sublimity appropriate to his project, whilst sifting away into oblivion any excess material which failed to suite the larger framework he had in mind. The sophisticated level of society and cross-cultural interaction Diez had witnessed in Istanbul, so peculiar to eighteenth/nineteenth-century Ottoman life, belonged for Goethe to this disposable excess.

To some extent, Goethe inherited from Herder his former mentor's problem of what to do with the faith of the Turks. Both men had invested a great deal of positivity in Islam, representing its origins as a wholly impressive explosion of energy, fed by the sublime—in the early “Mahomet” fragment, Goethe famously portrayed the birth of Islam as the beginnings of a small spring, growing into a river and finally flowing into the sea; both men had seen in such origins a model for their own national projects—Goethe, in speaking of Luther's nation-building, never tired of paraphrasing the Koran: “We sent no prophet to a people, unless it was in their language”²⁴; Goethe, perhaps more so than Herder, gave full acknowledgment to the sophistication of Arab/Persian culture, twinning it with his own (although on what terms and how free of cultural bias, admittedly, still remains debated). Both men, finally, nurtured a fairly strong antipathy towards the Ottoman Empire and towards Turks in general—in other words, towards the nearest region of Islam there was, practically adjacent to Europe. Herder's dilemma, in this sense, was perhaps made easier by his own explicit critique of European imperialism and cultural arrogance, an aspect of his thought his Weimar understudy did not inherit to the same degree. Critics have already written on how Goethe “did not like to think about colonial violence” (Noyes²⁵) and how, equally, the poet was “uninterested in tracing grand narratives of cultural evolution” between East and West (Kontje²⁶). Goethe's zeal for modernity, in the form of the Panama and Suez canals, seems to have overcome any distaste for the French conquest of Egypt or the colonization of the New World; one sometimes has the feeling, given Goethe's fondness for Möser's organicist view of history, that the poet's cosmopolitanism was quite happy to allow for analogies between East and West, as long as they did not develop into *genealogies*.²⁷ Goethe never really stresses the Arab influence on European poetry as much as Herder does. In his correspondence with Diez, we find a tacit absence of enthusiasm with the Orientalist's conviction of an Asian, indeed Turkic, influence on the classics. Goethe politely acknowledges the importance of learning “out of which myths, fables, legends the Greeks . . . formed their poetry”, and yet certainly does not go as far as accepting Diez's description of the Turkish Orient as “the fatherland of humanity”, and courteously circumvents the thesis that the Cyclops myth “must have come over from the Asiatics to the Greeks”.²⁸ To be fair, Diez's ideas are so outlandish that the poet's silence may have been just as much due to embarrassment as consternation.

And so the question arises: what maneuvers did Goethe's love of the Orient and devotion to Islam follow, whenever it came across the occupiers of Constantinople and the oppressors of the Balkans? How did Goethe handle the fact that the faith in which he often claimed to seek refuge and solace²⁹ was also the religion of a cultural/ethnic entity he had practically nothing positive to say about? The effective synonymy of 'Turk' and 'Mohammedan' in most European languages in Goethe's time—in certain moments, even Goethe himself appeared to employ this ethnic-religious overlap—made the poet's own political reservations problematic, if not contradictory, vis-à-vis his own admiration for Islam and its founder. Certainly, one consequence of this uneasiness was that Goethe wrote very little about the Turk. Unlike Herder, who in the middle of his *Ideen* leaves the reader in no doubt as to his opinion of this "Volk originating out of Turkestan" ("For what business do such aliens have in Europe . . .?" pp. 436–37), Goethe neither expended a single such paragraph on the Turks, nor followed Herder or Byron in including them in any positive way in his poetry. Although there are significantly more references to Turks and Ottomans than could be construed from the amount of critical attention on the subject, the fact remains that overall Goethe maintained a very Kantian silence concerning his nearest Muslim neighbours. This reticence becomes even more striking in the *Divan* and the near-complete Persification of the Muslim Orient we find within its pages. Even though Goethe would have read a tremendous amount about the Turks on his own textual 'trips' to the Orient—leaving aside the entire question of Diez, Goethe's research also included Hammer's work on Ottoman law and Turkish eclogues, Chabert and Toderini on the Turkish poets, Dapper and Tavernier's travels through Anatolia, Reland's two *Bücher von der Türkische oder Mohammedanische Religion*—any visible reference to Turks or Turkish are kept wholly out of the *Divan*, and almost completely out of the appended *Notes*. Chapters dedicated to Hebrews, Arabs and Persians find no corresponding section either under "Turks" or "Ottomans", whose subdued, marginal presence forms little more than a despotic backdrop to Persian history.

THE UN-CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES OF THE *ITALIENISCHE REISE*: GOETHE'S TURKISH ENCOUNTER

For Goethe, the Turk clearly lacked sublimity. If the "beautiful treasures" of pre-Islamic Arab poets were "written in golden letters",³⁰ and the "fertility and diversity of Persian poetry" arose out of "an inestimable breadth of the external world and its infinite richness" (*West-östlicher Divan*, p. 317), then the Turks were seldom anything much more than "wild hordes".³¹ Even in the *Divan*, the only example of Turkish creativity named is the comic sage of folk tales and rustic wit Nasreddin Hoja, safely on the lower end of any Aristotelian ladder. This finitude and quotidian triviality of

the Turk, either unreflectively despotic or forever bumbling alongside the infinity and enticing enigma of the Arab and the Persian, has a number of factors operating within it—questions of class, race, history, perhaps all compounded by something as straightforward as simple geographical proximity. Although Frederick the Great had officially invited one of the largest Ottoman delegations to Berlin in 1763,³² Goethe most probably saw his first Turk not in any German town but in Naples in 1787. He reports the even somewhat apathetically in his *Italienische Reise*:

Here they have a picture of the Turks, who are lying here captive. The *Hercules*, or so it was called, did not bring them, but a ship which accompanied the coral fisher. The Turks saw this Christian vehicle and decided to take it, but they found themselves tricked, for the Christians were stronger, and so they were overcome and brought here as prisoners. There were thirty men on the Christian ship, twenty-four on the Turkish. Six Turks died in battle, one was wounded. None of the Christians was hurt, the Madonna protected them. . . . It was strange to see the many thousands of people, who rowed out, boat after boat, to see the prisoners, especially the female Moor. (pp. 360–61)

Two points emerge from the passage. First of all, the impressive absence of any interest on Goethe's part in the captured Turks, his curiosity clearly more aroused by the interest of the locals in the spectacle than the spectacle itself. It is not even clear whether the poet even saw the captives, or merely their picture—as Goethe reports rowing out to them and seeing the female Moor (*Mohrin*) cry, we assume he must also have seen the prisoners themselves, although no descriptions follow. Two hundred years earlier, when Montaigne in the town square of his native Bordeaux came across a 'barbarian' captured and brought over from the New World, he riddled the incompetent interpreter with questions about the "barbarian's" customs and mores. When one considers the similar passion which seized Goethe thirty years later in 1814, the hunger for all things Oriental which drove him to read practically everything written on the subject, the poet's relative indifference to the captured Turks underlined how little they had to do with the exotic. Again, one could simply cite historical context here; Goethe had grown up in a world where the Siege of Vienna was still within living memory (Haydn's great-uncle, we will recall, had been killed by the Ottomans whilst trying to flee the city³³), where the figure of the Turk still lingered with bogeyman-like persistence, and was recalled with equal contempt, in the language; many towns in the south still had *Türkenglocken* (literally 'Turk-bells', bells which called the community together to pray against the Turk) or taverns with names such as 'The Turk's Head'. Words such as *türkenzen* (to act like a barbarian) or *turkeln* (to stagger drunkenly) were still widely used, and Türk was also a popular name for dogs.³⁴ To a limited degree, this colloquial semantic ubiquity of the Turk would in part

explain why the aura of the sublime, which Goethe was happy to throw around the Arab and the Persian, was never quite extended to an image as commonplace as a steeple or a hound.

The repetition of 'Christian' in the passage is also interesting, even if some ironic paraphrase of an Italian report is clearly at work here. The question of whether Goethe saw the Turk primarily as an enemy of civilization or an enemy of Christ is, like all such questions, tied to time and text, moment and context. Goethe's own ambiguous and often volatile relationship to his faith—from his rejection of Lavater's exclusivist exhortations and his description of himself as "decidedly non-Christian"³⁵ to his dying declaration of the "sublimity and ethical culture of Christianity"³⁶—certainly brings a factor of uncertainty into the equation. In one sense, Goethe's designation of the "Christian" ships with their "Christian" occupants employs the same voice he used as a dramatist in phrases such as "the *Erbfeind* the Turk" and "the might of Christianity", phrases which implicitly set a Muslim race against a Christian Europe. Although this early, explicitly Christian designation of the Turk as an unbeliever does spring up again in Goethe's writings—not just in his essay on sculpture, but also in a very late resentment of the Ottomans' conversion of Greek churches into mosques³⁷—they dwindle into insignificance beneath the overwhelming de-Islamification of the Turk that we find in the later Goethe, an emphasis on his cultural rather than doctrinal deficiencies, a strategy of airbrushing out anything even remotely Islamic from the "common foe" of Europe and Asia. Goethe's subsequent response to the battle of Cesme (1770), where the Russian navy score a convincing victory over the Ottoman fleet just off the Turkish Aegean coast, offers a good example of such ontological re-evaluation. He writes in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811–1814) of the destruction of the Turkish navy, the joy the victory inspired and of the Russian ship which was later blown up solely for the benefit of the commissioned painter Hackert:

Catherine [of Russia] . . . gave tough, well-favoured men free rein, in order to spread her might further. Since this took place against the Turks, to whom we are used to repaying quite rightly the contempt with which they themselves look down upon us, it was as if there had been no loss of life when these non-Christians fell in their thousands. The burning fleet in the port of Cesme caused general jubilation throughout the civilized world [*über die gebildete Welt*], and everyone participated in the triumphant exhilaration, when a ship was blown up in the reeds of Livorno, for the purposes of an artistic project, to preserve a true picture of that great event.³⁸

Über die gebildete Welt . . . Goethe could quite clearly have written "throughout the Christian world", particularly since the ones who were falling in their thousands were *Unchristen*, and yet something made

Goethe choose the word *gebildet*—cultured, erudite, literally ‘shaped’. A victory of the refined over the raw, of culture over class, of humanity over the horde (a word which, we will recall, comes from the Turkic root for ‘army’, *ordu*) is what Goethe chose to celebrate here. The imperialist expansion of Russia’s territories, in this sense, became rather a rolling back of despotism and ignorance (something which Goethe, unlike Herder, did not qualify with any alarm at Tsarist atrocities), an expansion of *formation* over the merely material. In this respect, it may be ironic to consider, in the *Mahomet* fragment, the positive expansion of energy Goethe’s Islam had signified forty years earlier, the unstoppable river of Mohammed which “triumphs through kingdoms/ giving provinces their names”, and carries “the might and beauty” of Islam on a “thousand sails” out to an open sea.³⁹ The Turkish ships burning in the harbour of Cesme, manned by Muslims and representing a Muslim empire, were clearly not part of this magical fleet.

A cynical commentator could, with a degree of justice, rephrase all of this rather glibly: for Goethe, the expansion of Islam was a magical, sublime, inspiring phenomenon, as long as it involved the conversion of Arabs, Persians and the bringing of civilization to Africa. As soon as it threatened Europe, however—in other words, the moment it threatened to break out of the safe, aestheticised, apolitical compartment the eighteenth-century’s cosmopolitan elites and Romantic poets were already beginning to prescribe for it—then a wholly different vocabulary had to be found. The fact that Goethe, in the *Notes* to the *Divan*, acknowledged some validity for the Muslim claim that “wisdom and illumination first began with Islam”⁴⁰, underlines how far Goethe saw Islam as a civilizing force. Indeed, towards the very end of his life, he even saw Islam as spreading, within its teaching, “a kind of categorical imperative”.⁴¹ If Herder had seen Kant as a Prussian Mohammed, Goethe ultimately saw Mohammed as an Arab Kant. The special pride the poet took in the knowledge that, alongside the Bible and the Koran, Napoleon had also taken a copy of *Werther* with him on his Egyptian campaign,⁴² also suggests that Goethe saw the French assault on the Ottoman territory as the conquest of a ‘lower’ culture by a ‘higher’ one—in this respect, the presence of both *Werther* and the Koran in the conqueror’s library offered no contradictions. As examples of civilization, both he and the Prophet were on the same side.

GOETHE’S TURKS AND THE DENIAL OF DEPTH: THREE TEXTS

They can’t drive the Turks out of Europe at all, although they can chip away and reduce their power . . .

—Goethe in conversation with Friedrich von Müller,
November 18, 1824

This acknowledgment of Islam not just as a civilization but also as a civilizing force was simply not allowed to interfere with Goethe's treatment of the Ottomans. Instead, Goethe's de-Islamified Turks appeared strangely free of any Muslim connotations which might complicate their cultural inferiority. To some extent, a vocabulary for this purpose already existed in the form of the "Asiatic hordes", the waves of non-Muslim Mongols which had attempted to invade Eastern Europe in the early thirteenth century. Eckermann has Goethe report in 1825:

Asiatic hordes really had come in and had already reached Schlesien; but the Duke of Liegnitz frightened them back with a great defeat. Then they turned towards Mähren, but here they were defeated by Count Sternberg. These fearless souls have always lived in me as the great saviours of the German nation.⁴³

Although Goethe would never explicitly call the Turks 'Mongols' (unlike Herder, who was keen to emphasize the central Asian provenance of the Turks as a people 'wholly alien' to Europe), two convenient features would provide Goethe with a vocabulary with which he could talk about the Ottomans without ever having to mention their religion: their swarming, threatening proximity on the edge of Europe and their perceived cultural backwardness with regards to the peoples they either already dominated (Greeks, Serbs) or intended to (Russians, Germans). Goethe's description of the conquest of Constantinople as succumbing to "that terrible wave" (*jenen furchtbaren Andränger*⁴⁴) supplies this sense of the Turk not as a rival civilization but rather an amorphous horde, tidally sweeping over the Balkans. Nothing sums up this careful filtering of the Muslim world more strikingly than Goethe's late, guarded description of the Crusades as a "false tendency", a misguided strategy which, nevertheless, had the positive effect of "weakening the Turks even further and preventing them from becoming masters of Europe".⁴⁵ Within a single sentence, Goethe was able to preserve his antipathy towards the Turks, whilst simultaneously leaving his sympathy for Islam intact—to the point, almost, of presenting them as a non-Muslim people, only incidentally affected by the great Crusades against Islam.

Aside from occasional remarks, allusions and observations, the only moments of real textual attention Goethe ever devoted to the Ottomans belongs to three separate texts—*Philipp Hackert* (1811), *New Greek Piraeen Sagas* (1822) and a preface Goethe wrote for a book on modern Greek literature by Jacovaky Rizo Neroulos (1827). All three pieces appear during the last decades of Goethe's life, the period in which the poet displayed his keenest interest in the various European conflicts with the Ottoman Empire. Each text reveals a different facet of Goethe's animosity towards the Turks, and even some indications of development. The sketches concerning the "Battle of Cesme", taking from the biography of the painter

Philipp Hackert, were written in 1811, a good three years before that fateful day in May when Goethe first began to read the book of Persian poetry, given to him by his publisher Cotta, which would plunge him into Oriental research for the next four years. Goethe spends eight pages describing, in painstaking, often tedious detail, the series of paintings the artist Hackert made of the battle for Count Orlov. Unlike Goethe's reference to the event in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, and the denial of humanity to the Turks we find there, the descriptions are almost completely free of comment. Neither the words 'Christian' nor 'non-Christian' can be found—the Ottoman fleet is referred to either as "the Turks" or "the enemy" (*der Feind*), whilst the term "glorious event" (*rühmwürdige Vorgang*, p.135) is about as emotional as Goethe gets over the conflict. Whatever mixture of contempt and triumph Goethe felt in his recollection of the victory is distilled and rechannelled, in *Philipp Hackert*, into a purely technical appreciation of the artwork. Great care is taken to guide the reader's imaginary gaze to the most significant portions of each painting: "Here we glimpse Russians, who are trying to save the Turkish flag, in order to keep it as a sign of their victory"; "Next we see that the flames of the enemy fleet have caught onto a part of the city and the nearby country houses"; "In the foreground we see the ruins of several enemy ships, and Turks who are trying to save themselves".⁴⁶ The fact that one of the ships is called *Europa* only serves to underline the international co-operation of the project; a Russian count, with the help of an Italian Duke and a German painter, illustrates his victory over the Turk. The absolute semantic flatness of the Turk in this piece—rather like Leibniz's faceless enemy on the banks of the Danube, one could easily replace the word 'Turk' in Goethe's text with "cannibal" or "pirate" without any significant change in meaning—is a consequence, but also in many ways a condition, of the necessarily abstract aim of the piece: to underline the integrity of Europa against the Asian. If Goethe's concept of history, as Benjamin famously said, was a sequence of individuals, then his concept of Europe may well have been a sequence of battles; Liegnitz, Amsfeld, Lepanto, Cesme, moments where the unanimity of Europe, be it through victory or defeat, was momentarily constituted by a threatening horde. The absence of any detail in the piece concerning the Turks, derogatory or otherwise, reflects this primacy of the self-evidently symbolic. In this sense, the Turk is not even worth the effort of misrepresentation.

By the time we reach Goethe's second text on the Turks, *New Greek Piraeen Sagas* (*Neugriechische-epirotische Heldenlieder*, 1822), a number of different factors have come into the equation. Goethe's seven poems, essentially the adaptation of the story of a Greek freedom fighter Janis Stathas and his fight against the Turkish occupiers of north-western Greece, maintains its unequivocally negative portrayal of the Turk, even if any physical descriptions of the Pasha and his men remain eerily, almost apophatically absent from the text. Equally absent is religion; the *Heldenlieder* follow "The Battle of Cesme" in their near-complete deletion of any

Islamic or Christian colouring—a single “Allah! Allah!” from a Turk about to be slain is the only inkling we receive of the Turk’s faith.⁴⁷ To fill in the lacunae left by such absences, Goethe’s two-hundred line poem foregrounds three ideas: pride, blood and death. The pride of resistance runs throughout the whole poem, beginning with the pride of the Greek rebels, who “don’t worry themselves about any Pasha”, and who would rather live “with wild animals” than with the Turks.⁴⁸ Given Goethe’s political sympathy with the Greek independence struggle (one which, however, he did not follow his beloved Byron by extending to the Irish⁴⁹) and the more historical empathy he felt for the Serbs’ similar efforts against the Ottomans four hundred years earlier, this foregrounding of dignity and self-esteem in the poem is quite natural. More striking is the emphasis on blood—in particular *Türkenblut*—an obsession with the murder or mutilation of the enemy which Goethe, in working with this adaptation of a Greek song from a French translation, had no qualms about reproducing:

Jannis swings right out
 With a sabre in his hand;
 The ship’s timbers run wet with blood,
 And reddened are the waves.
 “Allah! Allah!” the unbelievers
 Cry for mercy on their knees.
 “Life is cruel” cries the victor,
 May it belong to the defeated now.⁵⁰

We move from the sanitisation of the murder of the enemy in “The Battle of Cesme”, where barely an act of violence or drop of blood is depicted, to its exoticisation in the *Heldenlieder*, where gallons of it seem to flow. From the Albanian deputy of the Pasha who is sent back “strangled in his own blood” (p. 216) to the “bleeding head” whose address lies at the end of the poem (p. 219), sanguinosity forms, alongside death and honour, one of the many aspects of the bellicose in the poem. The generally valid claims made for Goethe’s pacifism, in this respect, do seem to encounter a very Turkish exception.⁵¹ Goethe’s attachment to the spiritual, cultural and possibly even racial idea of Europe (in the poem, one of the women of the Greek fighters is described as a “blondes Mädchen”, p. 217) led him, in certain moments, not merely to deny the humanity of the Turk but even to revel in their annihilation. As with Goethe’s joy at the victory of Cesme, what we see in such moments is delight in the expansion of spirit at the expense of appetite, a joy clearly facilitated by the monodimensional nature of the Turk’s representation. What makes this mere repetition of the *Türkenbild* in Goethe’s later poem more interesting is the fact that, by 1822, Goethe knew a lot more about the “common foe of Europe and Asia” than he had a decade earlier. In Diez’s two-volume *Denkwürdigkeiten*, which Goethe had read “from beginning to end” (*von Anfang bis zu Ende durch*⁵²), he would

have repeatedly encountered emphasis after emphasis on the humanity of the Turk, not just in the writings themselves but also in the abundance of anecdotes Diez offers in the prefaces and commentaries to the anthologised texts ("An old Ottoman once told me", "My old mosque teacher used to say . . ."). Indeed, on several occasions Diez insists the central aim of his project is to show how "incorrectly the Ottomans have been judged up to now", and to use their own writings to do proper "justice" to them.⁵³ All of this, on reflection, seems a long, long way from the faceless barbarians of the *Heldenlieder* and the gloriously gore-smeared sabres of the Greeks.

Although the increasingly hostile attitude Goethe displayed towards the Turks in the 1820s, fuelled by an ardent passion for Hellas, lies in almost perfect contradiction to the Turcophilia of one of his favourite Orientalists, it seems pointless to morally reproach Goethe for not automatically adopting Diez's Turkish sympathies. Goethe read endlessly throughout his life; it would be naive to simply select one title—even a title as influential as Diez's *Denkwürdigkeiten*—and demand to know why Goethe's political views did not immediately conform to those of the author's, simply because he was impressed with his scholarship and valued the warmth of their brief correspondence. What can be said, however, is that after 1816 Goethe continued to use a simplified, reduced and debased picture of the Turk in his writings, even though he quite clearly knew such maneuvers were false. A concrete disparity existed between the levels of intimacy with Turkish culture Diez's work had exposed him to, and the semiliterate, brutish tyrants he persisted with in his work. In fact, our commentary on these two interwoven denials of humanity and depth, of *Tiefe* and *Menschlichkeit*, to the Turk acquires a further modification in Goethe's last text, his preface to an 1827 book on modern Greek literature by the Greek writer and statesman Jacovakis Rizo Neroulos. As the subject matter of Neroulos's own book deals with the Fanariots—the class of Constantinople Greeks who occupied a privileged place within the Ottoman administration—Goethe's preface to the text, for all its negativity, offers probably the most sophisticated treatment of the Ottomans to be found in his work, as the poet had to present at least some limited acknowledgment of the polycultural complexity and tolerance of Ottoman rule: "No Governor or Pasha was allowed to interfere with the spiritual affairs [of the Greek patriarchy] nor call them before the court".⁵⁴ Rather than use the word 'tolerance', Goethe initially interprets this Turkish concession of power and authority to the conquered subjects as a sign of impotence (the Ottomans "found themselves faced with a great people, which they neither wanted to annihilate nor were able to", p. 316) and then, a page later, as an act of conniving—the Turkish suppressor "seduced" (*verführen*) the Patriarch, through such concessions and privileged treatment, into gradual harmlessness and compatibility (p. 317). With such maneuvers, Goethe tries to reconcile his conviction of the utter despotism of the Turk with the new level of complexity the treatment of the Fanariots demanded.

In one sense, the increase in sophistication of Goethe's treatment of the Ottomans in this late text is extraordinary. Banished is any talk of faceless bogeymen, *Türkenblut* or wild hordes; a negative, but nevertheless more complex picture of a subtler tyrant, cruel but clever, emerges, one which controls a more sophisticated empire than Goethe's earlier references to the Turks would ever have acknowledged. Two veins of continuity, however, remain; the downplaying of Islam and the cultural/spiritual (*geistliche*) inferiority of the Turks. In speaking of the concessions the Ottoman oppressor allowed the Greek patriarchy, here presented as the last preservers of the dwindling dignity and power of a "fallen empire" (p. 318), Goethe adds that the Fanariots were still able to exert some influence over their "tyrannical conqueror" (*tyrannischen Überwinder*):

For the important privileges, which were conceded to the Patriarch . . . for well over two hundred years, provided in the end a highly significant influence, the influence which the creative, thinking, educated, judicious and active [*geistreiche, Denkende, Unterrichtete, Umsichtige, Rührige*] has to have on those who possess not one of these characteristics and who could not make any of these effects truly their own. (p. 319)

The form, once again, has been overcome by the material, the mass (*Menge*). The sentient has been conquered and colonized by those lacking sentience; even in this victory of ignorance over erudition, however, a victory which went against what Goethe felt the new spirit of the age was all about, the conquered are still able to retroactively 'shape' their culturally inferior conquerors. These characteristics of superior civilization the Ottomans were allegedly lacking—creativity, thought, education, circumspection, initiative—were characteristics he would have found on every page of the Orientalist Goethe spent the better part of 1815–1816 poring over. From Diez's description of Istanbul as a city with thirty-five libraries, providing an intellectual and archival hub which drew scholars from Persia and Arabia,⁵⁵ to his account of how scholars have "multiplied" (*vervielfältigten*) under Ottoman patronage, and of how scholars command not only Turkish but also Arabic and Persian . . . in the writings of Diez, Goethe would have been continually confronted with the creativity and thoughtfulness the Turks were apparently so deficient in.

As Goethe's defamation of the Turk, unlike that of Leibniz or Luther, was a conscious gesture based more on strategy and calculation than ignorance or fear, its implications for our own investigations into the function of Islam in German thought are several. Most obviously, it challenges—in a much more striking manner than Kant's use of Niebuhr or Herder's reliance on Reiske—the standard Saidesque position that European writers and poets were fed by their sources ("What Orientalists . . . made available, the literary crowd exploited"⁵⁶). The selectivity with which Goethe made poetic use of Diez's Turkish writings, whilst never allowing them

for a moment to modify his political conviction of the inhumanity of the Turk, demands a long-overdue revision of the way “gifted enthusiasts” like Goethe or Hegel actually read their sources, and what exactly they took from them. Diez clearly hoped his writings would help Goethe dismantle Eurocentric attitudes. “As a lover of all knowledge” he wrote to Goethe in 1815, “you can speak about [Europe’s debt to Asia] in a more unbiased way than the philologists themselves”.⁵⁷ Although Said’s general view of the situation is far from incorrect, in the case of Goethe and Diez we have an Orientalist who was genuinely trying to provide positive, corrective information about the Turks in the conviction that Goethe would go on to disseminate it in an “unbiased” (*unparteiisch*) way.

The hollow Turks Goethe presents us with, both in his texts and in his letters and conversation, alongside the depth and complexity he deliberately omitted in their representation, implies a certain confidence on Goethe’s part in his ability to fashion the discursive universe of his reader. Goethe had already displayed this confidence positively in his desire “to provide some validity (*Geltung*) for the still unrecognized religion of Islam”.⁵⁸ By the end of 1816, having read both volumes of Diez’s *Denkwürdigkeiten*, Goethe certainly knew a great deal more about the Turks—their culture, world-view, habits and philosophy—than the vast majority of his readership. The fact that Goethe neither chose to share this knowledge with his readership nor use it to modify his own image of the Turk—barely a year later, we find him praising artwork which shows “Christians triumphing over Turks, particularly when the Christian soldiers are dressed in seventeenth century costume”⁵⁹—suggests that, for all his private research, Goethe felt a very public obligation not to disseminate information which might unnecessarily humanize “the common foe”. It could be that Goethe, in withholding any incongruous information from his audience and keeping to a wholly uncomplicated version of the Turk, saw himself as a form of unofficial censor, actively keeping to a stereotype of barbarism and ignorance he knew to be false. The zeal with which Goethe, in the *Italienische Reise* (published in the same year as the *Divan*), corrected travellers’ misconceptions of Italy—such as Volkmann’s report that there were “thirty to forty thousand idlers in the city of Naples”⁶⁰—was simply not extended to the much-maligned Turk.

What lies behind this ontological indifference to the object of misrepresentation? A stifled sense of discomfort, perhaps, at the tacit mendacity of such a gesture, one which possibly played a part in facilitating the greater degree of complexity Goethe finally conceded to the Ottomans in his piece on the Fanariots. A certain mild schizophrenia may also be the consequence of such conscious decisions to misrepresent. The scholar Anidjar, in his analysis of the enemy, discerns a shift between Augustine and Aquinas in their interpretation of the commandment “Love thy enemy”. If Augustine had “abolished the differences concerning God, neighbour and enemy from the perspective of love”⁶¹—that is to say, we are required to love our

enemies as we love God—then with Aquinas the New Testament obligation to love our *Feind* is privatised within an internal sphere, a notion of perfect (and for Aquinas near impossible) “interior love” quite separate from our “outward marks and demonstrations” (p. 28). To some extent, one might consider Goethe’s contradictory treatment of Turks and Mohammedans as a Romantic version of this Thomist distinction between an internal (perfect, poetical, sublime) Mohammedan and an external (unacceptable, political, all too actual) Turk. In the inner world of his artistic imagination, Goethe was able to love the Muslim, converse with him, identify with his practices and faith; in the outward world of politics and Europe, Goethe was simply unable to reproduce this *Mitgefühl*, so enthused was he with contempt for the Turkish horde. What is interesting is that, unlike Leibniz (a figure whose biography resembled his own in so many ways), Goethe did not allow his own empirical research to change his views concerning the Turk. Whereas Leibniz, as we have seen, gradually softened his own views towards “Mohammedans” once he began to study their languages, Goethe managed to prevent his passive awareness of the sophistication of Turkish culture from ever spilling over and contaminating the purity of his contempt for them.

In noting such neat compartmentalizations, we could conclude with some sweeping metastatements concerning the role the late eighteenth-century cultivation of a Romantic subjectivity—and all the solipsistic insistence on the aesthetic/mnemonic autonomy of that individual space—had to play in the production of such contradictory attitudes, indeed whether such developments facilitated the kinds of ambiguities we find in Goethe and Byron. After all, the English poet who praised the “universal [dignity] amongst the Turks” and claimed to have nearly converted to Islam in Istanbul could also lament how “turbans now pollute Sophia’s shrine”.⁶² To ask whether such ambiguities have the same structure as those found in, say, a sixteenth-century figure such as Luther, is an interesting question—although in the case of Goethe, difficulties are compounded by the cracks and equivocations found in Goethe’s generally positive *Islambild*. The fact that, in 1827, a decade after the *Divan*, Goethe could remark how his “oriental” phase had now been “shed and left behind like a snakeskin”⁶³ does suggest a waning of enthusiasm for the Orient perhaps not wholly unconnected with his close following of developments in Greece and the Balkans. Nevertheless, for all the uglier remarks Goethe made about the Turks from 1811 onwards—in particular, his apologetic description of the execution of eight hundred Turkish prisoners by Napoleon as the “mature decision of a long war council”⁶⁴—there lies an irony in the fact that the last recorded reference Goethe made to the Turks, in March 1831, a year before his death, was couched in exclusively spiritual terms: “My dear child . . . even if I wanted to name [the divine], like a Turk, with a hundred names, it would still not be enough and faced with such infinite characteristics I still wouldn’t have said anything”.⁶⁵ Clearly, the separation of these spiritual

and political vocabularies in Goethe, a separation which would decide when to talk about Turks as barbarians and when to talk about them as Sufis, persisted in Goethe up to the very end of his life.

Reading the brief correspondence which took place between Goethe and Diez, it is difficult not to feel a certain sadness at the enthusiasm, humility and gratitude the elder scholar shows at having been thought of by the great poet. Diez, in his first reply to Goethe, describes himself as feeling “astounded” and “ashamed” at having been chosen by a “man such as Goethe” (*ein Mann Ihrer Art*) to aid him in understanding the “misrepresented” and “maligned” Orientals.⁶⁶ Although Goethe, in a short letter, had merely expressed his appreciation of the book of Kabus and requested clarification for three or four specific points, Diez immediately attributes a much greater project to his correspondent. Even if Goethe never expresses to Diez any such aim—the closest he comes to it in his reply is thanking Diez for helping him visualize more clearly the spirit and mindset of “those strange peoples” (*jene merkwuerdige Voelker*)⁶⁷—Diez’s final letter is full of examples of how “uneducated Europeans” view Turks and Persians as “strange animal[s] out of allegedly barbaric lands”.⁶⁸ There is something quite driven about the passion with which Diez relates these examples, furnished from his own experience of having to act as interpreter for travelling Turkish and Persian delegates. The frustration of a man who has spent six years living in a foreign city, and now has returned to suffer the narrow opinions and prejudices of his fellow countrymen, comes across in the strength of his examples, the sentences dramatically underlined for emphasis. He tells Goethe:

Even the questions, which are put by us to Orientals, are often so clumsy and indecent that we ought to be ashamed of them. Someone once asked me in Berlin whether they made shoes in Turkey. I replied: you can see for yourself that I didn’t come back barefoot. Somebody else once asked a young Ottoman of about twenty years of age why they didn’t have any arts or sciences in Turkey. I was too embarrassed to translate this question to the young man. Instead I told the questioner . . . that in Turkey they have their own arts and sciences, just as in Europe they have theirs . . . My attempt to keep the question a secret from the young man was in vain, however, for he guessed what they had asked, went red with anger and asked me in his language: “*Do these people think we are dumb animals?*”⁶⁹

What Goethe made of Diez’s anger is almost impossible to say. As someone who, barely five years earlier, had been able to rejoice at the naval victory over the Turks “as if there had been no loss of life when these non-Christians died in their thousands”, Goethe may have felt embarrassed at being unable to share the indignation of a man he otherwise admired. If Diez’s examples made any impression on the poet, they certainly had no effect;

Goethe's "terrible" (*furchtbaren*) Turks, and all their later appearances in his work, seem to have enjoyed little modification from his encounter with Diez. Diez, on the other hand, clearly felt he was writing to a kindred spirit. Rightly awed by the depth and power of Goethe's genius, the old scholar must have felt elated that the greatest poet in the German language, a figure around whom he felt "the Muses had gathered" (p. 25), had chosen his work to be inspired by. It was natural for Diez to assume that Goethe, being more "unbiased" than most European philologists, would also take up Diez's own cause—that of correcting the "unjust judgements" made about the Ottomans.⁷⁰ In the stream of examples and complaints Diez made in his letters to Goethe concerning the much-defamed image of the Turks and the Europeans' erroneous convictions of their backwardness, one wonders whether the Orientalist ever realized the melancholy truth that, for all the volume of his pleas and passion of his convictions, he was in reality writing to no one but himself.

5 Friedrich Schlegel and the Emptying of Islam

I hadn't taken anything with me other than the *Divan*, the latest work of Goethe, which we read here together, a kind of Oriental or, as he calls it, West-Eastern psalm out of the Hammer translations of Hafiz . . . alongside a lot of partly quite foolish prose there are some of the most beautiful poems. It is strange to see how in his old age he has suddenly started behaving in such a Turkish manner.

—Schlegel to Dorothea, October 13, 1819¹

The mild surprise Friedrich Schlegel felt at Goethe's late 'Turkishness' carries within it a number of different, delicate ironies. The two men had, after all, worshipped different Orients, at different times. By 1819, Schlegel's early Indomania had subsided into a much milder form of philological curiosity, one more concerned with apocalyptic eschatologies and the construction of a comprehensive world-history than any investigations into a Sanskritic *Uroffenbarung*. Goethe's 'Turkish' turn must have struck Schlegel as the first stages of a familiar illness he had now recovered from, thanks to his 1808 conversion to Roman Catholicism. Goethe, in a sense, was experiencing in his old age the same Romantic passion for the exotic that Schlegel himself had tasted in his youth; if both figures chose to idealize different portions of the planet, dedicating their energies to different faiths, this did not prevent them from elevating their chosen Orient at the expense of the adjacent one. Goethe's thoughts on how terrifying "Indian monstrosities"² must look to Muslims run parallel to Schlegel's own mistrust of Indian Muslim historians and their "inability to grasp . . . a belief system as foreign and deep" as Hinduism.³ There even arose, at least on Schlegel's part, a distinctly colonial sense of possessiveness with regards to the literary directions of their endeavours—Schlegel's dissatisfaction, in a letter to his brother, at the representation of India and Indians in the *Divan* reveals a deeper indignation at Goethe for having dared to encroach upon what he considered to be his own intellectual territory.⁴

Other ironies lie beneath Schlegel's half-praise, ironies which draw on the Vienna diplomat's own youthful responses to Islam, twenty years earlier. The voluptuous 'Mohammedan' paradises he found in the *Divan* could have reminded Schlegel of his own, now distant conviction that "the sensual Mohammedan conceptions of heaven are the correct ones".⁵ Although the brief burst of enthusiasm Schlegel felt for the Muslim Orient in the years 1798–1802 (Schlegel was in his late twenties) gradually petered out, his references to it did not disappear, but rather mutated and developed

along a bewildering array of different trajectories—race, literature, history, empire, apocalypse. The aim of our chapter on Schlegel will be to try and give some meaning to these sprawling trajectories, to try and show where they coincide and where they overlap. In 1798 Schlegel, then twenty-six, considers Mohammed, alongside Moses and Christ, to be one of the “grand authors of Religion”; seven years later, the Prophet’s enthusiasm has been rewritten as a violent version of Protestantism and by 1817 we are told, quite simply, that “Mahomet’s kingdom” represents “the powers of Hell”.⁶ And yet beneath this apparently unproblematic deterioration in Schlegel’s *Islambild*, reflecting the generally perceived metamorphosis from freethinking *Frühromantiker* to reactionary mystic, lies a whole series of competing forces—aesthetic, political, theological, philological, ethnological; an almost Heraclitean flux of differing impulses which were forever threatening to pull his oeuvre apart in a variety of different directions, and which transform the story of Schlegel’s Islam from a biographically predictable variant on his Indophilia to something much more complex.

It is difficult to say whether Schlegel’s dedication to the fragment, his cultivation of it as a privileged means of encapsulating powerful moments of insight, actually enabled the mélange of Islams in his work to be, or whether they simply recorded a series of thought-trains in progress which would have otherwise remained hidden. The arrangements and re-arrangements found in Schlegel’s notebooks, certainly, seem to serve as a kind of metaphorical microphone for the uninterrupted flow of his thoughts—in one set of jottings from 1802, the word ‘German’ is first set on one side of a table, between Italian and Spanish, and then crossed out and pushed over to the other side, in between Arabic and Persian.⁷ However, Schlegel’s own insistence on the necessary autonomy of the fragment, “entirely separated from the surrounding world and complete in itself like a hedgehog”,⁸ may also have facilitated the isolated nature of many of his remarks, and the compartmentalizations of the various vocabularies they emerged from. This emphasis on the semantic sovereignty of the fragment emerges as a device most visibly in the expression of doubt—Schlegel’s notebooks reveal he was not afraid to record even the most profound misgivings he had concerning his work, self-queries so radical (Is there such a thing as European languages at all? Might not a study of Islam be essential to an understanding of the Bible? Was Mohammed’s Reformation perhaps not so superficial after all?) that they carry, at times, a tone reminiscent of the later Wittgenstein.

Scholars disagree on what the predominance of the fragment in Schlegel ultimately means; if some critics see it as a consequence of loss, the symptom of a modern memory crisis (Johnson¹⁰), others perceive a more positive function—Michel Chaouli’s designation of the Schlegelian fragment, for example, as a kind of laboratory where “the irreducibility of interruption in movement” can be displayed and experimented with.¹¹ However we view the fragment—as modern lament for a lost whole or proto-deconstructive

affirmation of irony¹²—the fact remains that Schlegel’s dedication to them offers, with a view to our own study, a captivating chronicle of one nineteenth-century mind’s attempts to interpret, evaluate and locate the Muslim world in relation to Europe. Schlegel’s positions change, particularly in his early work, from year to year, sometimes from month to month, on occasions even from page to page; Arabs are seen as “divine Tartars” on one page, lumped together with Egyptians the next, and then as being “originally one” with Indians before finally having their status established a decade later as “universalized Jews” (*universalhistorisch gewordene Juden*).¹³ The abruptness and spontaneity of some of these shifts in Schlegel’s maneuvers offers us an unrivalled glimpse into the jostling plurality of different voices which vied with one another for expression within the discursive space we call ‘Schlegel’. As we shall see, this contest of vocabularies was by no means over after the famous ‘turning point’ (*Wendepunkt*) of 1802–1804.

One of the consequences of the variety of responses to the Muslim world in Schlegel’s corpus is that a variety of precedents become discernible; in his endless consideration of peoples and languages there lies a clearly Leibnizian obsession with the *Ursprung*; the late, apocalyptic approach to the world of Islam—and, as we shall see, his own interpretation of Islam’s similarity to Christianity—bear many resemblances to those of Luther; his emphasis on the non-European influences, and even genealogies, within Europe is reminiscent of Herder’s own philological efforts to relocate “our little northern continent” within a larger and older conflux of forces; in contrast to such philological openness towards the origins of *Europa*, Schlegel’s later political remarks, particularly with regards to Turkey and Russia, reveal a very Kantian anxiety concerning the boundaries of Europe; finally, the dual status of Schlegel as both Indologist and literary critic, a major European intellectual who was also a translator of Sanskrit, places him alongside Goethe, Herder and Lessing as one of the key moments in the influence of Orientalism on the German literary and philosophical tradition, moments where the non-European—be it in the form of a Vedic hymn or a Persian ghazal—was successfully injected and absorbed into the intellectual mainstream. In this sense, Schlegel himself represents a kind of pool into which various streams—*Frühromantik*, Enlightenment, neoclassical, even Lutheran—fed, gathered together and mingled incompletely.

SCHLEGEL THE ROMANTIC: MOHAMMED AS WORLD-FASHIONER

As far as I am concerned, the aim of my literary project is to write a new Bible, and to walk in the footsteps of Mohammed and Luther.

—Schlegel to Novalis, October 20, 1798¹⁴

At first glance, Schlegel's responses to the Muslim Orient before 1804 do not seem too different from the standard Romantic features already attributed to it, as we have seen, in Herder and Goethe—sensuality, unity and sublimity, the fervent creativity of the Prophet, the violently explosive energy of Islam, an essentially poetic inclination amongst the Arabs and a tendency to regard Mohammed, alongside Luther, as someone who used language to mould a people. Schlegel's most positive remarks concerning Islam are generally (though not completely) confined to this period, ending with his return to Germany from Paris at the age of thirty-two. Certain factors peculiar to Schlegel, however, do colour his own literary and aesthetic responses to Islam in a certain way, making his own variations of sublime, sensual Arabs and Lutheran Mohammeds somewhat different from the versions we find in Goethe and Herder.

Many of the positive, Romantic features of the early Schlegel's Islam will later become material, after his conversion to Catholicism, for his subsequent demonization of the faith. The adulatory pairing of Luther with Mohammed as creative religious geniuses, for example, re-emerges after 1810 in the description of both figures as "heralds" (*Vorbote*r) of the Anti-christ.¹⁵ Schlegel's youthful admiration for the blending of boundaries in Islam, particularly in its conception of heaven ("Mohammed alone", we are told, "understood what Paradise really was"¹⁶) provides the main basis for one of his last diatribes against the faith and its "infinite harems" and "painted gardens of lust" (*Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 9:277). It is interesting to see how the same qualities or features become reinterpreted by Schlegel in the course of his shift towards a Catholic conservatism—even the holistic consistency of Arab life Schlegel had once so admired ("everything in one style, beautiful and original"¹⁷) becomes a cause for disdain as Schlegel laments Mohammed's "false union of church and state".¹⁸

Although there is a general movement here from a passionate, sensual appreciation of Islam in the early Schlegel to a thoroughly Christian repudiation of the faith after 1803–1804, it would be wrong to paint a picture of sudden disenchantment. Well before 1802, there are enough remarks to show that the young Romantic had already begun to see Arabs, at least in some moments, as a destructive, uncultured and childish people.¹⁹ What is so curious about Schlegel's positive aesthetic responses to Islam is that they persist relatively late into Schlegel's life, even after he had dispatched practically every other aspect of the Muslim world either to oblivion or the devil. In the overall negative review of Islam in his *Lectures on Universal History* (1805–1806), the "poetic character" of the Arabs and their "love of poetry" is seen as "perhaps the only thing . . . they can be praised for".²⁰ Even in 1812, by which time Schlegel had begun to argue for the German colonization of Turkey, praised the English in India for "freeing" the Hindus from their Muslim masters, declared Mohammed to be of Satanic provenance and Islam to be "against all culture (*Bildung*)",²¹ Schlegel could still refer to the persistence of Arabic words in Spanish as similar to those of

Latin in Italian, and was still able to argue for Arab fairy tales as the most suitable material for opera.²²

The Romantic admiration of Mohammed's creativity—Goethe's "extraordinary" poet-prophet, Herder's nation builder—finds in the young Schlegel's ambitious project to write a new Bible a crucial development, one which sees the Arab prophet not merely as a superior poet or early nationalist, but also as a figure from whom a new understanding of modernity could be learnt. The *Frühromantik* circle which had famously met in the final years of the 1790s—Novalis, Schleiermacher, Tieck and the Schlegel brothers—were involved in this quest for a way out from the confines of the religion/*Aufklärung* debates of the late eighteenth century. Dissatisfied with the sterility of reason, and yet unable to live in the stultifying realm of conventional religion, the Early Romantics sought in aesthetics a radically new vocabulary, one which would supply a liberating ethics and also create new worlds of meaning. F. C. Beiser puts it best: the *Frühromantiker* built upon "one of Kant and Fichte's most fundamental insights: that we live in a world that we create; they add to it only that our creation should be a work of art".²³ Looking through many of the fragments in Schlegel's *Ideas* (1799), it is not difficult to see how Luther and Mohammed could be viewed as crucial predecessors in this rejuvenating process of world-creation. Phrases such as "religion is the animating soul of world-culture", "fantasy is the organ of man for divinity" and, perhaps most relevantly for the founder of Islam, "Only he who has his own religion, an original view of the infinite, is an artist", make it easier to grasp how a young, liberal-thinking German intellectual might have regarded the imagination of Mohammed as a model for his own Romantic project.²⁴

Schlegel's admiration for Islam as an aesthetic product, enviably authentic, radiantly holistic, played such a central role in his view of Mohammed as an exemplary world-fashioner that he even used it as a scale of judgement for the classical (the dithyramb, we are told, has to radiate pure beauty if it is to resemble "a Koran of poetry"²⁵). Although no synonym for 'Islam', Schlegel's early obsession with the term "arabesque"—the scholar Polheim tells us he used the word fifty-eight times between 1798 and 1800²⁶—offers some clues as to why Mohammed's Koran, which in some moments he appeared to see as an arabesque *Roman*²⁷—operated as such a crucial precedent for his own project. The influence of eighteenth-century chemistry on Schlegel's own quest for the enigmatic kern of innovation (see Chaouli), a quest which for the young Schlegel lay in the experimental combination of disparate elements, may explain why Schlegel saw the arabesque—and correspondingly "the whole Arabic religion" (ibid.)—as a successful experiment on Mohammed's part, one which impressively melted together the different political/poetic/cultural/spiritual aspects of an entire people. "A Volk", writes Schlegel, "must live their poetry, like Arabs and Indians".²⁸ After all, had not Goethe defined the arabesque as the "tasteful bringing together of diverse objects in order to ornament the inner walls of a

building”?²⁹ Schlegel’s own significant association of wit (*Witz*) with ‘bonding’ (*Verbindung*), the bringing together of different elements to produce an “explosion of bound spirit”,³⁰ certainly helps us to understand the attention the thinker devoted to the term ‘arabesque’—variously defined as the goal of all painting (or sometimes “absolute painting”), the oldest form of human imagination, the most original form of painting or even, most memorably, “visible music”.³¹ The integration of differences into a higher, common element was clearly a generic feature of Schlegel’s Arab Orient. The implicit violence such processes suggest chimes well with the inherent destructiveness Schlegel perceived in the Arab nature; indeed, some of Schlegel’s most explicit remarks concerning the Arab’s inherent tendency to annihilation, read in this light, do begin to take on an almost chemical tone—as if the rise of Islam itself were the consequence of a violent, catalytic reaction.

SCHLEGEL THE THINKER OF VOLK AND SPRACHE: ISLAM AS VOLKSWANDERUNG

The Mohammedans are first of all to be considered as a Christian sect inspired by the wildest Protestantism; at the same time however, also as an Arab *Volkswanderung*, in contrast to, or in parallel to, the Germanic version (Arabs settled in the greater part of Spain, similar to Goths in Sicily or Naples).

—*Notes on History and Politics* (1826)³²

Somewhat paradoxically, Schlegel’s ethnological/philological interest in race and language both facilitated and complicated his later demonization of Islam. On the one hand, it provided an easy, race-orientated means of explaining away problematically positive virtues of Islamic civilization such as its tradition of poetry (wholly attributed to the race-character of the Arabs—although an “essentially unpoetic” religion, Islam sprang up amongst a “poetic *Volk*”³³); on the other hand, a degree of scientific integrity in Schlegel’s Leibnizian quest for *Ur-völker* and *Ur-sprachen* continually forced the Arab Orient, despite his best efforts, into the centre of his research. This means that, in a manner partly analogous to his literary/aesthetic responses to the Muslim world, Schlegel’s interest in race and language was able to provide a handful of positive, isolated remarks about the Muslim Orient even towards the very last years of his life.

Schlegel was certainly familiar with the developments in the race debates towards the end of the eighteenth century—Schleiermacher’s stinging review of Kant’s *Anthropology*, in which he claimed the text’s essential value lay in its contribution to the science of “Kantology”, had appeared in the 1799 edition of the *Athenaeum*. Not only did Schlegel use specific terms such as *Keim* (seed) and *Race*, he also appeared to follow Herder’s notion of *Völker*

or tribes as having particular, inherent characteristics which their customs, religions or languages gave expression to. Bellicosity, poetic sensibility, a nomadic nature and an exaggerated imagination are all qualities Schlegel continually attributed to the Arabs' *Stammcharakter* or tribal characteristics. Sometimes, these qualities caused problems. Schlegel's constant insistence on the nomadic character of the Arab brought them, as a people group, so close to the wandering nature of the Indo-Germans that, in 1827, Schlegel had to contradict himself and declare, somewhat unconvincingly, that the one thing which *did* distinguish the Arab *Volkswanderung* from its Indo-German-Greek version was that the Arabs "stayed in their homelands", unlike the first Aryans.³⁴ Enough critical attention has been given to the way Schlegel's interest in India replaced an East–West binary dualism with an Indo-Germanic one (Librett), constituting "a considerable constriction of Early Romantic cosmopolitanism into a more narrowly defined Indo-European tradition".³⁵ Although Martin Bernal has probably gone farthest in allotting this pivotal role to Schlegel in the perceived removal of African and Semitic elements from a Graeco-Indo-Aryan vision of Europe, scholars such as Handwerk and Figueira have come to Schlegel's defense. Handwerk emphasizes the "picture of an exceptionally enlightened, historically ancient culture" we are presented with in *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, and how such a picture radically displaced both Greek and Christian traditions from their originary status; Figueira insists the Saidesque politicizing of Schlegel's work to be "limited" and misdirected—attention should rather be given to "the crucial issue of enchantment/disenchantment as a cornerstone of cross-cultural reception".³⁶

Regardless of where one stands on this slightly anachronistic question of Schlegel's Indo-Eurocentrism—i.e. what manner of ethnocentrism it was, and to what extent it contributed to a general airbrushing out of Africa and the Semitic East from the genealogy of Europe—the fact remains that Schlegel *was* interested in race, was peculiarly inspired by the "common derivation" (*gemeinschaftlich Abstammung*) of German and Sanskrit,³⁷ and this commitment to an Indo-German origin did colour his responses to the Muslim world whenever the two happened to overlap. Certainly, before 1803 Schlegel seems to have accepted the widespread myth that Arabic and Indian were "originally one".³⁸ A conviction that "the centre of humanity must have been in Syria or Persia" appears to sustain this presence of a Judaeo-Arab Orient in the midst of things,³⁹ and an 1803 assertion that Arabic and Greek are the "absolutely necessary foundation" for serious scholars shows how integral Schlegel saw Arabic and Arab culture to the European intellectual's project of historical self-examination. Gradually, however, influences do begin to take a different turn, as Schlegel becomes more aware of the linguistic and ethnological separateness of Persians and Arabs. Chivalric customs in Spain are given a Gothic, rather than Arab, source; the Turks, whose sciences and arts for Schlegel were "not of the slightest worth", have their love of poetry reattributed to a "Persian or

even Gothic origin”; by 1811 the “Uzens” and “Pechens” are declared to be “not Turkish but Finnish-Hungarian”, whilst Schlegel (quite correctly) reminds us again and again that the *Arabian Nights* are not Arab but of Persian, and ultimately Indian, origin.⁴⁰ Indeed, it is in these moments of interface between the Muslim Orient and the Indo-Persian world that Schlegel appears to repress an antipathy towards Islam in favour of a sympathy for its most Indian (read Indo-German) aspect. Persia’s ancient name (*Artäer*) always had for Schlegel a “wholly Germanic sound”.⁴¹ One of the few positive Muslim figures in Schlegel’s review of the Crusades, the “excellent” Saladin, we are reminded, was not of Arab but of Kurdish origin; the Persian poet Hafiz, in Schlegel’s Oriental notebooks, is proposed as another Petrarch, one whom no modern poet can surpass in terms of “objectivity”; and it is certainly with some satisfaction that Schlegel relates (as Goethe would) how the Persians were the “eternal enemy” of the Turks.⁴² In such moments, the Persian’s status as “Mohammedan” became less relevant than his racial/cultural proximity to the Indo-German chain of *Zuwanderung* Schlegel invested such existential energy in.

These two interpretations of the rise of Islam—as the successful project of a gifted individual, perhaps even the early version of a proto-modernity, and then later as an inspired *Volkswanderung*—reveal this shift in attention on Schlegel’s part away from Islam as an aesthetic phenomenon to that of it as an ethnic one. Although Schlegel was certainly aware of the millennia-old tradition of Arab Christianity,⁴³ in his later years he seemed to emphasize an increasingly ethnic correspondence between individuals and belief systems, not merely in offhand remarks such as “Only a German can be a true Christian” but also in his conviction that the Spanish can teach us what Arabs as Christians would have been like, a remark which effectively negates the entire Arab Christian world in a single sentence.⁴⁴ There is certainly nothing coherent or systematic about this yoking together of *ethnos* with *credo*; in the only two major accounts of Islam Schlegel gave, separated by over twenty years (1805 and 1828), the exact relationship between Islam and the Arab remains inconsistent. If the earlier account emphasizes the role of “the warlike spirit [*Geist*] and character of the nation” in the expansion of the faith, and even insists the key to understanding Islamic poetry and history lies in “the seed [*Keim*] . . . of the original character of the nation”,⁴⁵ Schlegel’s later (1828) narrative diminishes the ethnic influence on the faith. Although the usual range of characteristics are still attributed to the Arab—fanaticism, pride, vengefulness—the creed of the Prophet itself now appears to be much more alien, “neither old nor new . . . empty and void of content”.⁴⁶ A hollow system of metaphysical rules, an inconsequent addendum, merely tacked onto a particular culture, as opposed to the living, organic outgrowth of the Arab nation. This final version of Islam, which Schlegel produced towards the very end of his life, appears (to borrow Hegel’s near perfectly contemporaneous description) to be truly “cleansed of any nationalism”, a kind of anonymous, untitled

program which the Arabs merely installed, without ever colouring or influencing its enigmatically vapid nothingness in any way.

We shall come to the motivation behind this emptying of Islam in a moment. In our section on the ethnological/philological vocabularies Schlegel used in his approach to the Muslim Orient, one final note should be made concerning the strange tension between Schlegel's own dedication to Europe and the relentless historicism he devoted to its origins. This tension should not be exaggerated into any form of contradiction; in texts such as Schlegel's *History of Literatures Old and New* (1810–1812), although concerned with the relocation of significant aspects of Greek thought in an earlier "Asiatic" context, the purposes of such research is still to provide "a historical view of our European refinement". And yet the unspoken consequence of such efforts, as Halbfass and others have already noted, was effectively the redescription of Europe as an Asian colony, a present-day consequence of a distant, inevitably more significant origin (what Schlegel would call the "old and pure" fountains of truth). Schlegel was certainly too keen a critical thinker not to have been aware of the semantically belittling dangers inherent in his relentless quest for the *Ursprung*, as a late remark in the notebooks, barely three years before his death, reveals:

The holy tongue has, it seems, five dialects: Syrian, Punic, Hebrew, Arabic and Ethiopian. Seven may well be the number of languages into which those . . . organically connected variants separated themselves: Indian and Persian, Greek and Roman—German and Scandinavian, or Gothic and German. These are only six. Maybe there are only six after all . . .

The other languages can simply be considered *climactically* and differentiated as North Asian or Tartar, then South Asian-African and American languages. A large number of these have been changed through mixing with the second class . . . (The doubt arises, if there is such a thing as *European* languages at all—or if they are not wholly *Asiatic* and *African*).⁴⁷

Apart from noting the equal status of Arabic with Hebrew as one of the divine language's original dialects—a gesture which reveals, to some extent, Schlegel's indebtedness to German Orientalism's mid-eighteenth-century struggle (Reiske, Michaelis, the Leipzig Orientalists⁴⁸) for the autonomy of Arabic—what is striking is a barely intrusive, parenthetical anxiety concerning the possible emptiness of the word *Europe*. When we consider the enormous amount of energy Schlegel dedicated to the idea of Europe—as editor of the review *Europa*, as admirer of Novalis's essay on Europe and Christianity, as Metternich's conservative diplomat and someone who passionately believed in "the dispersal of European culture throughout the world"⁴⁹—it is difficult not to see Schlegel's doubt in the existence of "European languages" as quite unsettling, an example once again of the

philologist's ideological settings being disturbed by the implications of his own research, by the products of his own fervour. In this respect, the skepticism Schlegel's enormous reading and linguistic knowledge gave him concerning the validity of the word *europaische* was never really allowed to leave its brackets.

SCHLEGEL THE HISTORIAN: ISLAM AS SIGNIFICANT VARIABLE

History is the centre of everything.

—*Notebook on Philosophy* (1806)⁵⁰

There is a sense in which history, more than any other discipline, offers the best key to understanding the essence of Schlegel's many literary, philosophical and philological endeavours. His oft-quoted definition of the historian as a backwards-looking prophet, with its Hebrew connotation of someone who sees clearly not just in the future but also in the present, underlines the intimate link between the past and the future in his work. An understanding of the past, for Schlegel, did not merely reflect an obsession with the *arche* of mankind, but gradually also came to indicate a search for the *telos* of that same humanity. Particularly within Schlegel's final, apocalyptic phase, this mutual relevance of past and future explains how the history of the Muslim world, and Europe's encounters with it, played a not inconsiderable part in Schlegel's own historical project to map the provenance, and implicitly the trajectory, of a Christian Europe.

Novalis's own essay on Europe and Christianity (*Die Christenheit oder Europa*), which exerted such an influence on the twenty-eight-year old Schlegel, was itself an essay in history. Novalis's medieval vision of "those beautiful, gleaming ages past" when a common Christianity "bound together the furthest provinces of this wide spiritual kingdom"⁵¹ was a lament for the lost unity the Reformation had destroyed: "From then on . . . Catholics and Protestants were further apart from one another . . . than they were from pagans or Mohammedans" (*ibid.*, p. 42). Of course, scholars such as Hellerich have already shown us how Schlegel's subsequent Catholicism was neither whole-heartedly pious nor simplistically ever-present.⁵² Nevertheless when Schlegel pleads, as he frequently does, for "the whole of Christianity to be re-united in one body", Novalis's idealized landscape of a harmonious, spiritually pure and socially stable Christian Europe remains an important store of images.⁵³

This powerful fantasy of a medieval Christian continent, at one with itself, worshipping the same true faith from St. James to St. Petersburg, accounts for some of the reductions, adjustments and omissions the Muslim world underwent in Schlegel's historical reconstructions. Particularly

in moments where “Mohammedan” history came too close to its Christian counterpart—either literally, in terms of an alliance or collaboration, or metaphorically, in terms of a similarity of values or goals—Schlegel screened and sifted his information to prevent the emergence of any inconvenient proximity or parallels. The alliances and peaceful cohabitation of Spanish Muslims and Christians we find in even in a conservative historian such as Krause (whose *Begebenheiten* Schlegel had read in 1806) were simply left out by Schlegel, who scarcely makes mention of such cross-cultural relationships in his description of the *reconquista* as a “war of liberation”⁵⁴. Muslim-Christian alliances in general, unsurprisingly, did not go down too well with Schlegel, who would forever express anger and disgust at the unnatural union of Turk and Christian against a European foe. Even though an increasing empathy with Catholicism enabled him to accommodate, without too much disappointment, Protestant versions of such alliances (such as that of the Reformist Hungarians with the armies of Suleyman in their march on Vienna) Schlegel appeared to be continually upset at the historical decisions of Catholic states such as France, Venice and Austria to side with the Ottomans.⁵⁵ The Pope, writes Schlegel in 1807, should have excommunicated Franz I the moment he made an alliance with the Turk.⁵⁶ Although at least one critic has quite rightly posited Schlegel against Kant as a “dissolver [of] boundaries” in terms of irony, Schlegel’s desire, we may infer, to blur the linguistic boundaries of Europe, or the semantic boundaries of language, did not necessarily spill over into his political thought.⁵⁷

Another example of the filters the author of the notebooks made use of to preserve and restore his Novalesque vision of Europe can be seen in the way Schlegel’s limited acknowledgment of Muslim tolerance and civility, both as a principle of trade amongst Arabs/Turks and as one of the positive consequences of despotism,⁵⁸ was never really allowed to influence his near-completely negative picture of Muslim empires. This is particularly striking in an early note (1805) on Suleyman the Magnificent, whose “Turkish state was wholly based on education [*Bildung*] and tolerance”, and whose empire was “unevenly more civilized than what is usually thought”.⁵⁹ Whatever conviction this remark may have possessed, it does not appear to have affected any other facets of Schlegel’s historical understanding of Islam; in the same year, the faith of the Turks is seen explicitly as a religion “against all education [*Bildung*]”, whilst two years later Schlegel can begin to speak of Russia’s “fight against Mahomet and barbarism”.⁶⁰

When we foreground Schlegel’s devotion to *Geschichte* as a means of discerning the precious pattern of the universal within the bewildering mass of the particular, then Islam’s primary significance emerges not as an aesthetic project or *Volkswanderung*, but rather as an unignorable world-historical force. The watershed years of 1802–1804 provide both positive and negative versions of this function. Before his turn to Catholicism, Schlegel’s interest in Islam as a possibly incomplete and unactualized “progressive

religion” reflects the centrality of Mohammed and Arab history in Schlegel’s early attempts to write a history of the world⁶¹; plans abound to write dramas of Ali, Omar and even devote the middle stages of a planned cycle to Arab history. A typical remark (1800) runs as follows:

From Leonidas to Alexander—from Scipio to Trajan—from Charlemagne to Frederick the II; and then the history of the Caliphate; these are definitely the highlights in cosmopolitan attention.⁶²

In the jigsaw-puzzle world of the early Schlegel’s many teleologies, Islam *fits*. Massive, millennia-stretching ideas such as the novel, cultural openness or the concept of mythology appear to connect the Muslim world to its nearest neighbours with little or no difficulty; Alexander the Great is found in the same *epos* as Mohammed; a history of the “Romance from Moses to Mohammed” is given brief consideration, whilst Islam, Judaism and Christianity are endowed with “a systematic unity”.⁶³ History, in this sense, lends a chronicler’s homogeneity to Islam, gives it a certain compatibility with other cultures and civilizations, one which admittedly drains it of uniqueness and limits it to a specific function within a specific design, but at the same time frees it from traditional prejudices and allows it to be reconfigured in relation to fresh, different reference points—German monarchs, Greek heroes, figures in the Bible, Portuguese poets and even Scottish kings. When we find, on one page of Schlegel’s 1802 notebooks, Mohammed in the very middle of a host of names to include in a series of “epics” (featuring, amongst others, Christ, Macbeth, St. Sebastian and Richard III),⁶⁴ it is difficult not to wonder what radically different approaches to Islam might have developed if the trajectory of Schlegel’s thought had not taken such a Catholic, conservative turn.

In a curious way, the historical importance of the Muslim world in Schlegel’s early notebooks persists in his later research, even if this centrality has now acquired a diabolical significance—Islam no longer as an important *telos* in the unfolding of human development, but rather as a species of apocalyptic signpost, warning of the end ahead. In terms of historiography, it is interesting to see how the *form* of Schlegel’s historical exegeses remains the same, but this time filled with a very different content. The Arabs are still seen as a transitional point “from the old world to the new”, a key moment in the mutation of human history, even if this epochal hinge is now a step not in the development but rather in the devolution of the human spirit.⁶⁵ In this sense, Islam’s function as an epoch-demarcator still remains intact—even in 1812, Mohammed is still considered to have “begun a new age in Asia”⁶⁶—but now operates within a history of error and gradually encroaching darkness, a melancholy chronicle of how the present-day catastrophe of reformation, revolution and disbelief came to be. Unsurprisingly, Schlegel’s later remarks tend to link together Mohammed, Luther, Robespierre and Napoleon as key sequential figures in this

cumulative subversion of the one true order. His description of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt as a "relapse back into the Turkish"⁶⁷—an essentially Oriental spirit of revolution finally returning to its 'Mohammedan' origins—shows, perhaps more than any other remark, how a vein of subversion running through Mecca, Wittenberg, Paris and Istanbul eventually came to dominate Schlegel's later understanding of history as a series of temporary, diabolically inspired setbacks.

The persistence of medieval Christian tropes of Islam in Schlegel's historical vocabulary did not merely manifest itself in an age-old association of Mohammed with social and political disturbance, but also in an even older tradition: an eschatological, at times even numerological response to the Muslim world as one of the signs of the end of the Age. In the last decade of his life, Schlegel's work reveals a curious obsession with the calculation of the exact place of Muslims in world history. In contrast to Kant and Hegel's Enlightenment diminution of Islam on the stage of world history, Schlegel followed medieval scribes such as Nicholas of Lyra and Alexander Minorita (d. 1271) in attributing an apocalyptic centrality to 'Mohammedanism' and its followers. Already in 1813 we are told "the anti-Christian state is the Turkish one"⁶⁸ with Ottomans emerging as the clearly dominant pole of evil in Schlegel's Manichean description of a Christian Europe struggling to roll back the frontiers of barbarism surrounding it. By 1821, Schlegel is wondering whether the Greeks and Turks, "melted together", might not be the seventh nation mentioned in the Book of Revelations.⁶⁹ From then on, a glut of calculations follow—columns of numbers, dates, battles and reigns, a profusion of plus and minus signs, even tables of population figures—as Schlegel wades through a sea of historical digits, trying to discern an esoteric symmetry in the numerical fabric of history, and thereby geometrically ascertain at what point in the near future the various projected lines will meet. A typical remark, taken from 1826, reveals this Franciscan fervour on Schlegel's part for the hidden unity of time:

From the Hegira 622 AD until the first conquest of Jerusalem in 637 is 15 years.

The Christian conquest of Jerusalem by Gottfried is 1099 AD. Take this from 1832 and we get 733 years. 622 from 1831 . . . are 1209 years; up to 1832 makes 1210, and up to 1834 is 1212 years.

637 taken from 1832 is 1200 (minus 5 years).⁷⁰

The flight of Mohammed, the fall of Jerusalem, the First Crusade's capture of the city and the Fourth Crusade's sacking of Constantinople are all woven together by Schlegel in an attempt to find out what the next five years of European history will bring. The scholar who, many years earlier, had once praised Lessing's "infinite contempt for the letter",⁷¹ was now devoting

himself to an equally infinite worship of the number. The medieval echo of Schlegel's maneuvers is striking; just as figures such as Alexander Minorita interpreted 666 to be the number of years of Islam's dominion, Schlegel adds the number of the Beast to the year of the second Turkish conquest of Jerusalem (1187) to arrive at the date for a *third* possible conquest of the city by the Antichrist—1853.⁷² What differentiates Schlegel from thirteenth-century predecessors such as Joachim of Fiore or Nicholas of Lyra is the familiarity he had with the cultures he was effectively reducing to a sequence of Satanic co-ordinates. Schlegel had spent a good number of years absorbing endless books on Persians, Arabs and Turks—works by Jones, de Sacy, d'Herbelot, Reiske, Eichorn and Wahl. The degree of metaphysical violence the former Persian scholar had to inflict upon the Muslim world he had read so much about in order to make it fit its apocalyptic co-ordinates constitutes a remarkable victory of eschatology over philology.

This may be a naive remark, given the way Schlegel was able to draw on his command of different disciplines to justify his political intentions (the way, for example, Schlegel's Aryan ethnology would serve his more explicitly colonialist/imperialist designs). Surely the whole point of Said's critique, it might be argued, was to show how European philology, particularly its Oriental branches, constantly assisted such eschatologies and teleologies. Within such a reading, knowledge forever reaffirms power, just as power creates the conditions for knowledge. Schlegel's apocalyptic calculations, rather like his description of a German conquest and colonization of Turkey as a "return to Asia",⁷³ would have taken place *because* of Schlegel's scholarship, not despite it. And yet there are enough strange moments within Schlegel's historical texts to suggest at the very least a tension between his philological, Christian and political commitments.

One such moment lies in Schlegel's wholly ambiguous feelings about the Greek independence war against the Turks, a conflict which (as we have seen) produced strong anti-Turkish sentiments from figures such as Goethe, but which Schlegel's Catholic mistrust of liberalism led to view with a much cooler air. Although Schlegel certainly saw the contemporary Ottoman state as ruled by "the unmediated presence of Satan himself",⁷⁴ and was never in any doubt about their necessary exclusion from a Christian Europe, he refrained from viewing the Greek-Turkish conflict symbolically as a struggle between believer and infidel. For all of his talk elsewhere of a Europe united in Christianity against the Saracen might, Schlegel had little good to say of the Greeks and appeared to see both sides as resembling one another in their revolutionary tendencies—by 1824, Schlegel even goes so far as to describe the Turks as "belonging to the liberal party, because of the foreigners in their Egyptian army",⁷⁵ a remark which seems to suggest on Schlegel's part a persistent belief in the essentially cosmopolitan nature of "Mohammedan" cultures.

Another strange moment lies in the bizarre use of the Islamic calendar in Schlegel's otherwise wholly Christian calculations to find the beginning of

the new Christian epoch, a gesture which seems to suggest something far from conventional in Schlegel's very Catholic histories:

The year 945 is 900 years (minus 14) before 1831.

The year 1264 is 600 years (minus 33) before 1831.

The year 1573 is 300 years (minus 42) before 1831.

With the number 945 there is a remarkable disintegration of the actual caliphate or of the anti-Christian empire, right there in the 330th year of the Hegira; a year whose number of 330 here is also very significant.⁷⁶

To give significance to the number of the year in the Hegiran calendar is to view the continuum of history, however momentarily, from a Muslim perspective. Schlegel was by no means averse to such notions of decentring—even in his later years, he often insisted on the necessity of immersing oneself in Arab culture in order to understand it.⁷⁷ What is interesting in this passage is how a standard Orientalist reflex—that of quoting dates from Islamic history in the Hegiran calendar as well as the Christian one—finds its way into a Christian exegesis of history, with the “Mohammedan” number itself even being given a Christian significance. Schlegel does not comment on whether the manifest will of God in world history can be decoded using Hegiran dates in addition to Christian ones, or even on the divine wisdom of using a Muslim calendar to encode the cryptic symmetry of a Christian time frame. What this use of a Muslim chronology does show is how Schlegel's Orientalist background, despite his religious convictions, would sometimes produce a problematic empathy with the Muslim world, and lead him to strategies a more conventional Catholic thinker would shy away from.

The problems Schlegel's unquestionable erudition and uncommon familiarity with ‘Oriental’ cultures would cause for an approach to history which was clearly intended to privilege Christianity as the *arche* and *telos* of *Weltgeschichte*, also arise in Schlegel's highly pertinent awareness of the proximity of Arabic and Hebrew. Although occurring after his turn to Catholicism, most of these remarks are relatively early; nevertheless, they offer an illuminating glimpse into how Schlegel's historical gaze, bereft of rhetoric and bias, would allow a more sober treatment of Islam to emerge. In a passage from Schlegel's private ‘Oriental’ notebooks (1806) we find the following:

If the thought is correct, that the Prophet (*nabi*) was not merely a seer but also a man, who gave himself over as a *tool* of God and who put himself forward as a symbol and sign of God, exposing himself to misjudgement and abuse; so is this highly illuminating [*erklärend*] for Christ.⁷⁸

Naturally, Islam here acquires the role of an illuminating footnote to Christianity, a peripheral source of information which might enhance and augment our knowledge of the Christian tradition. The idea, however, that the Arabic term *nabi*—more so than its Hebrew equivalent, *na'vim*—may

explain (*erklären*) for us more fully the mission of Christ does bring Christianity into an *historically* dependent relationship to Islam. Although the positivity of this gesture should not be exaggerated—Islam is still, in the end, primarily a database of desirable etymologies—it does reveal Schlegel's private awareness of the historical incompleteness of Christianity, and the many different linguistic registers he was able to use when talking about this. Schlegel's sober consideration of the Arabic word for 'prophet' is all the more striking when one considers the public lectures on Islam he was giving around the same time (1806), and the "intolerant, bloodthirsty, oppressive" religion he was discussing within them.⁷⁹

This idea that a sound historical understanding of Christianity may require a knowledge of Islam to complete it emerges again, two years later, in an introduction to a publication whose purpose, we are told quite simply, is "Christianity"—that is, to represent "the holy tradition of divine love amongst the human race from the very beginning".⁸⁰ Schlegel comments on the usefulness of Islam in this project:

the Old Testament has a secret meaning, which is enclosed within the hard shell of what people usually understand it to mean. Where should one look for all the key to these riddles and mysteries? Partly in the commentaries of the Hebrews themselves, be it in the legalistic habits of the Talmud . . . or in the secret interpretations of the Kabbala? Should one not also take into consideration the view of a closely-related people with a not wholly dissimilar [*nicht ganz unähnlicher*] religion? I mean Mahomet and the Mohammedans' views on the Old Testament; a perspective, which seems all the more important, the more one feels justified in assuming that the religion of Mahomet borrows not simply out of the Old Testament and the Gospels, but also, at least in part, out of a local source of older, albeit very distorted traditions of the Church fathers.⁸¹

It is not exaggerating to claim that, as far as this passage is concerned, the secret of the origins of Schlegel's Christianity lay partially in Islam. Although it is a dependency which in one sense confirms the precedence of the Christian faith and Islam's reliance upon it, Christian commentators are still unable to provide us with the whole picture concerning the Old Testament. The Islamic tradition, insinuates Schlegel, possesses something Christianity does not—access to this 'deeper' meaning of the Old Testament, to this mysterious (albeit distorted) source of *Ur-christentum* which our present Christianity has somehow missed out on. This incomplete self-knowledge of the Christian faith—and the superior epistemological edge Schlegel's suggestion gives "Mohammedanism"—not only exemplifies the kind of difficulties Schlegel would have in reining in his keen sense of philological inquiry, but also partially undermines the standard refrain Schlegel employed to explain away Islam's similarities to Christianity as mere loans,⁸² an absence of "originality". Suggesting the Koran may help

us better understand the Bible certainly upsets this one-way relationship somewhat, positing a Christian religion which actually requires illumination from “Mohammedan” sources, instead of vice versa; most ironically, Schlegel’s suggestion actually resembles, in form if not in content, the standard Muslim description of Christianity as a valid but incomplete faith, whose cryptic verses can only be understood by reference to the final revelation of the Koran.

To some extent, Schlegel’s late, nihilistic emptying of Islam—“a prophet without miracles, a religion without mystery, a moral without love”⁸³—is connected to this unease the scholar clearly felt concerning the resemblances between the two faiths. To say Schlegel was tortured by such similarities would be too dramatic; nevertheless, in his more candid remarks concerning the similar values of Islam a faint discomfort can definitely be discerned, at times even a sense of inferiority:

What is good in the Mohammedan religion is that their whole obligation to justice begins with, and is dependent on, religion; this should also be the case, in a different and improved way, in the Christian religion (cannot be done in Christianity, for the . . . state is seen as a temporary evil. . .). (pp. 1808–9)⁸⁴

Schlegel struggles here with a grudging admiration for a society in which religion has permeated every sphere of activity, and a very Kantian disdain of Islamic law as something which focuses on the external. Indeed, Schlegel’s strategy for dealing with the similarities between “Mohammedanism” and his own Christian faith would be to transform Islam into a belief system obsessed with exteriority, a creed of pure surface, a religion made up solely of signifiers, without any signifiers—what the scholar would finally term *inhaltsleer* or ‘empty of content’.⁸⁵ Muslims may do what Christians do and believe many of the things Christians believe, but beneath the veneer of their comportment lies a semantic vacuum. As early as 1797, Schlegel insisted what made Christianity different from Islam was an essentially inner violence, even if in certain moments in the later notebooks he appears to wonder if this was not also true for Islam.⁸⁶ Although emptied of any unique spirit or characteristic quiddity, the shell of Islam still presented a problematic likeness, a theologically undeniable similitude which would ultimately require a theological solution. In the very last years of his life, Schlegel employed one of Christianity’s oldest tools for dealing with the similarity of rival faiths:

The anti-Christian system of Mahomet, the anti-Christian spirit of the Mohammedans, was nearer, more closely related and more similar to Christianity than [simply] being based on the oneness of God and a (false) holy book, even more so than its recognition of Christ and Moses as prophets; that is precisely why it is much more pernicious than

pagan anti-Christianity. The nearer, the more similar, the more closely-related something is, the more fatal is the poison.⁸⁷

Although the history of this gesture—and the hermeneutic dilemmas it invokes, as even the validity of signification itself is called into question—would doubtless begin with 2 Corinthians 11:14, Luther remains the most relevant precedent for this strategy of explaining the similarity of an enemy's resemblance through diabolical dissimulation. Although he acknowledged he “could not deny that the Turk esteems the four Gospels”, and even that Turks were “faithful, friendly and careful to tell the truth”, the similarity of values and beliefs were merely a “cloak of light” which the Devil hid behind.⁸⁸ If scholars have written of the solipsistic paranoia, even nihilism which Luther's hermeneutics subsequently had to undergo, it is worth considering Schlegel's own epistemological dilemmas for a moment. Schlegel's knowledge of Persian and Arabic, alongside his familiarity with Islam and with Islamic history, distinguishes him from the other figures in this book; as someone who had spent many years tracing, in several languages, the processes by which cultures and faiths influence and are influenced by one another, this emptying of Islam—and subsequent repadding with a conveniently diabolical content—represents a certain moment of panic in Schlegel's closing years. If Europe, he had begun to realize, was nothing more than an empty phrase, linguistically a composite of Africa and Asia, then Christianity was just another (incomplete) historical system, a composite of Greek, Jewish and Gnostic texts. Schlegel's late conviction of his own epoch as being characterised by “the confusion and blending together of light and darkness” was an indirect consequence of this inability to locate the elusive X quality which would successfully privilege Christianity over its near-identical rival.

The encroachment of Roman Catholicism upon Schlegel's early, origin-obsessed Romantic Orientalism makes him a somewhat unique figure in this book; a response to the Muslim world very much nineteenth century in content, but thirteenth century in form. In the middle of his life, like a traveller who suddenly discovers he has taken with him more baggage than he actually needs, Schlegel had to decide what to do with his substantial knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic in the wake of his conversion—whether to retain it in a non-threatening, even profitable fashion (anti-Protestant remarks, Christian eschatologies, observations on foreign policy), or consign its more subversive possibilities to the relative oblivion of the notebook, the footnote and the casual aside. The proliferation of Islams in Schlegel's work—as *Volkswanderung*, aesthetic project, world-historical variable, apocalyptic counter and footnote/parallel text/post scriptum to Christianity—reflect the tensions Schlegel's knowledge of the Muslim world would create for his demonization of it.

There are implications a study of the *Islambild* in Schlegel may have for the larger question of how much influence an epoch's scholarship can have

on its intellectual mainstream. Schlegel's conviction of the worthlessness of Turkish culture and the inherent aversion of "Mohammedanism" to any aspect of *Bildung* appears to have survived, intact, the countless positive images of Islam and Muslims he would have found in the many Orientalists he read and quoted. In a book such as Wahl's 1798 *Spirit and History of the Game of Chess*, for example, Schlegel would have not only encountered endless erudite quotations from Turkish epigrammatists and Arab historians, but would also have read firsthand of the multilayered fabric of Ottoman society (Arab, Turk, Greek, Armenian)⁸⁹; Schlegel's belief in the essential hostility of Islam to culture remained constant despite reading, in the foreword to Jones's 1771 Persian grammar, how Europe had lain "in ignorance . . . [whilst] the Califs in Asia encouraged the Mahometans to improve their talents".⁹⁰ Even some of the historical sources Schlegel used offered a more positive approach to Turks and Arabs than can be found in Schlegel's own histories; in Remer's *Handbuch der neuern Geschichte*, for example, we find a neutral and generally reasonable tone in its reporting of the Russo-Turkish wars—descriptions of the Grand Vizier Ahmet Aga as a "resourceful and clever man", an acknowledgment of some of the rights and concessions Ottoman Serbia received as the war went their way, and most importantly a condemnation (as with Herder) of the Tsarist's destruction of the Ottoman port of Ismail as an act of "unlimited and abhorrent cruelty", none of which would affect what Schlegel saw as a "struggle against Mahomet and barbarianism" (20:117).⁹¹ Once again, the comparison with Leibniz, whose poor view of Islam was somewhat improved through a second-hand acquaintance with its languages and cultures, is striking. As with the case of Goethe, it does suggest there was something increasingly fractured and multichambered about the emerging nineteenth-century self which facilitated the accommodation and coexistence of contradictory attitudes and bodies of knowledge by a recourse to some form of compartmentalization. Perhaps the aesthetic cultivation of a particular ideological landscape—Winckelmann's serenely Hellenic Greece, Novalis's harmoniously Christian Europe, Herder's dream of a *pax slavica* extending to the Bosphorus—engendered a certain mental bifurcation in the approaches of these thinkers (Herder, Goethe, Schlegel) who had read enough Hammer, Reiske or Jones to know the illusory nature of the Oriental/Occidental abstracts they were appealing to. Schlegel certainly dreamed of a uniformly Catholic Europe, following Kant and others in an exclusion of both Slavic and Mohammedan Easts: "If there were a Catholic monarch ruling in Turkey as well as [Sweden], that would be the most beautiful [*herrlichste*] barrier against the terror of the Russians and the East".⁹² The beauty of the walls Schlegel longed to build around his Europe, to keep the Slavs and the Mohammedans outside, perhaps confirms a prioritising of the aesthetic in the late Schlegel—a primacy of the image, an almost artistic dedication to a very particular *topos*, which would forever keep the scholar's keener philological suspicions in check.

6 Hegel and the Disappearance of Islam

and so Goethe turned to the Orient and with his *Divan* delivered a string of pearls [*eine Perlenschnur*], which in its sincerity and rapture of the imagination surpasses everything else.

—Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*¹

As a beginning to our study of the polyphony of voices found amongst Hegel's various responses to the Muslim world, we could do worse than start with this single term—"string of pearls". Hegel's admiration for Goethe is well known—he famously considered himself to be the poet's spiritual son—and it is hardly surprising to find his esteem for Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan*, essentially a fusion of Oriental and Occidental metre and motif, expressed in these terms. It was not, however, the only time Hegel used the phrase. Another very different book also received the same compliment from Hegel—a book, this time, not of fusion but division: Herder's story of the Spanish reconquista, *Der Cid*. Hegel saw in Herder's account of the driving out of the Moors from Christian Spain a "flower of national medieval heroism", a "string of pearls . . . rich in content and full of multifaceted interest in love, honour, family pride and the rule of kings in the struggle of Christians against the Moors".² Two literary strings of pearls for Hegel, then; one bringing poles together, the other pushing them apart. Two poems loved and admired by Hegel—one attempting to blur boundaries, the other celebrating their rightful restoration.

The point, in one sense, is a minor one, and yet it is indicative of a much larger series of tensions within Hegel. The Persian poets, fanatical/hospitable Arabs and "raw" Turks we find in Hegel—and the multiple contexts they bring with them—partly reflect an already well-researched set of ambiguities in Hegel towards Christianity, the French Revolution, Judaism, the ever-present father-figure of Kant and the whole idea of 'Germanness' (which Hegel occasionally referred to not as *Deutschtum* but rather *Deutschdumm*—not 'Germandom' but 'Germandumb'). Our examination of the different voices Hegel used when writing about Muslims—the registers of Enlightenment, religion, aesthetics and race—will try to elucidate and account for these complexities by carefully paying attention to the modality of Hegel's prejudices.

HEGEL AND THE NON-EUROPEAN: SOME CRITICAL FRAMEWORKS

The classic image of Hegel as an infinitely systematic philosopher, sweeping up the manifold contingencies and particularities of world history into

one gradual universal direction (essentially that of German Protestant Idealism), has certainly become a synonym for the archetypal Eurocentric thinker. This image does both justice and injustice to the work of Hegel. The notorious way in which continents such as Africa and faiths such as Islam simply ‘disappear’ within Hegel’s unfolding World-Spirit needs no apologists, nor do his overall dismissive remarks of Ottomans as ‘barbarians’ and his explicitly racist attitudes towards other peoples. Even scholars profoundly sympathetic to Hegel—such as F. C. Beiser—acknowledge his pronouncements on the Chinese, Indians and native Americans to be examples of “the very ethnocentrism from which historicism should liberate us”.³ In this respect, our chapter on Hegel will not be offering the picture of a ‘misunderstood’ thinker.

What has also been taking place within Hegel scholarship, however, is a gradual reformulation and refinement of the perceived movement of Hegel’s Eurocentric thought. On a practical level, the critic Bernasconi has drawn attention to how the 1822–1823 lectures on the philosophy of history had more pages devoted to the Orient than the Greek/Roman/European sections put together, a fact which reflected Hegel’s own “extensive reading” about the Orient and which Hegel’s editors considered to be “wearisome” and unnecessary.⁴ Some of Hegel’s most famous analyses—the dialectic of master and slave, for example—have been relocated against a much wider background of empire and colonialism (Buck-Morss), whilst the theme of empire itself has been used to show how the manifestation and expansion of the Idea itself in Hegel acted as a tacit metaphysical justification of European colonialism (Serequeberhan). In an analysis of the relationship between negativity and empire, the flight and return of Spirit to self in the *Phenomenology* has been intriguingly redescribed as the expansion of mobile capital and the subsequent “sedentary moment of settler colonisation” (Noyes).⁵

In all of these cases, the non-European in Hegel has come to represent not just a lamentably overlooked moment of marginalia, but rather a key context, even a negative but central operational function, in the work of Hegel. A similar ambivalence has been discerned by the smaller number of critics who have written on Hegel’s treatment of Islam. If Leuze considered the absence of Islam within Hegel’s plan of world religions “a fundamental weakness”, other critics (such as Schulín) tried to emphasize more positively the role of Hegel’s Islam as “the last teacher of the West”, whilst acknowledging the prejudiced way in which the rash, abstract, external expansion of Islam is set against the slower, more concrete and substantial development of the West.⁶ Scholars such as Hardiyanto take this anachronistic version of Islam as a paradoxically preliminary and incomplete Christianity a step further, seeing an Islamic faith whose resemblance to (and awkward post-dating of) its Christian rival would forever create problems for Hegel. Others, concentrating more on Hegel’s literary endeavours, see within the thinker’s admiration for Persian poetry a form of compromise, as Hegel

allows poets such as Rumi and Hafiz a tentative place alongside Goethe on the lowest rung of the final phase of Romantic art (Stemmrich-Köhler).⁷

However easily the Euro-logocentric straw man of Hegel the Systematizer might lend itself to our twenty-first-century sensibilities—Marx’s Prussian tool, Kierkegaard’s blind teleologist, Derrida’s *agélastes*, Judith Butler’s storyteller—some caveats have to be enunciated before leaping with postcolonial glee upon Hegel’s emptying of Islam and effective non-recognition of the Ottoman world.⁸ One of the first reservations to note would be a cynical, at times deeply contrarian streak in Hegel, a willingness to hold beliefs or positions which were not entertained by society at large. Whether it is a derogatory and clearly mocking reference to “we German scholars”, his contempt for Bavaria (which he often called ‘Barbaria’), his distancing from Fries’s anti-Semitism, his rejection of Schlegel’s vision of medieval Catholic *Germania* as “twaddle” which was “parroted” by north Germans who had never set foot in the south . . . all testify to a profound independent-mindedness in Hegel’s thinking, albeit fed by an equally profound mixture of anti-populism and anti-papism.⁹ Hegel’s similarly fervent rejection of Romantic German nationalism as silly and shallow—he insisted he could only really savour the *Nibelungenlied* by “translating it into Greek”¹⁰—along with the constant charges of pantheism and even atheism which were brought against him in his final years,¹¹ do reveal an extremely critical edge to Hegel’s thinking. To understand how Hegel was able to switch off this critical gaze whenever he wrote—or chose not to write—about the Muslim world will be one of the tasks of our chapter.

A second note of caution to be introduced before speaking of Hegel’s use and abuse of the Muslim world lies in the indebtedness of his project to historicism, and his awareness of the dangers of historical projection. “We have to take history as it is”, Hegel tells us in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, “our task is to proceed historically, empirically”.¹² Hegel, like Herder before him, was keenly aware of how *chronos* and *topos* limit us both culturally as well as spatio-temporally—ancient Greece, we are told, is no more understandable to us today than “the perceptions of a dog”.¹³ What we find in Hegel’s lectures is a sensitivity concerning the way historians bring their own categories (*Kategorien*) with them to the study of history, categories which in the very worst cases are merely “a priori fabrications” (*apriorische Erdichtungen*). This consideration of the epistemological finitude of the historian, however, whilst making Hegel very careful about how German historians treat ancient *Hellas*, appears to be momentarily suspended when writing about “uneducated peoples” such as the Arabs, or indeed the Turks, a *Volk* who “have shown themselves to be wholly incapable of culture”.¹⁴ And so, as with Leibniz and Herder, we have a dedication to the empirical truth of historical subjects which seems to be contradicted by their actual treatment. Critics such as Beiser see some of the reductionist views on non-Europeans in Hegel as the unfortunate lapse of an otherwise commendable thinker—a failure on Hegel’s part, so

to speak, to be truly Hegelian and translate his own commitment to context and historical detail into practice. We will have to consider whether the opposite thesis—namely, that Hegel said what he had to say about non-Europeans precisely *because* he was so committed to the empirical—may not also have some part to play.

A final caveat lies in the sophisticated dynamism of the Hegelian movement of subjectivity, not to mention of history itself. This is not to shield some of Hegel's more unpleasant pronouncements with a smoke-screen of complexity (a version of the argument "Hegel cannot be racist because he is so subtle"), but merely to point out how any attempt to essentialize Hegel using words such as 'Christian', 'German', 'European' and 'bourgeois' will have to take into account the *process* of identity in Hegel—a feature whose politically interesting consequence is the open-endedness of beings. Of course, the constant creation of new modes of being through the subject's repeated encounters with the obstruction of alterity does not relieve Hegel of the charge of Eurocentrism—but it does make us ask more carefully what kind of *Europa* his progressive deletion of the non-European entails. Simply bringing on a vulgarized version of Hegel, stuffed full of 'End of History' and 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis' clichés, is not going to help us understand Hegel's Islam and the curious "labour of the negative" it performed in his work.

HEGEL'S SOURCES ON THE MUSLIM WORLD: FROM SCHOOL SPEECH TO LOCAL NEWSPAPER

At present, driven back into its Asiatic and African quarters, and tolerated only in one corner of Europe through the jealousy of Christian powers, Islam has forever vanished from the stage of history at large, and has retreated into Oriental ease and repose.

—Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (1830–1831)¹⁵

One of the first references to Muslim culture in Hegel lies, oddly enough, in the text of Hegel's high school graduation speech (*Rede beim Abgang vom Gymnasium*), which the eighteen-year-old gave in the September of 1788. As high school students at that time had to choose a topic to give a short speech on before leaving for university, the teenage Hegel chose the state of education in Ottoman Turkey. Although only the last two sides of this speech have survived, it seems the essential drift of the address was a grateful celebration of the Schwabian school system, in contrast to the apathy of the Turkish authorities to the education of their people ("How clearly we see in this nation the terrible consequences of their neglect".¹⁶). The schoolboy Hegel refers to the "rawness of [the Turks'] character", and yet does not blame this backwardness on their "natural ability", but rather on the State's attitude towards that crucial word for Hegel, *Bildung*. Hegel's

earliest biographer, Rosenkranz, suggests the young philosopher probably acquired his knowledge of the topic from Rycault's *Histoire de l'état présent de l'Empire Ottoman*.

Hegel's school speech on the Turks is not merely of anecdotal value. It indicates how early in Hegel's intellectual life the Muslim space of non-Europe would be seen as a space inimical to culture. Of course, adolescent writings are hardly the key to a mature thinker's thought, and yet in Hegel's case it is significant that, in order to express gratitude for a "prince who is convinced of the importance of education" (*ibid.*), Hegel reached for a European account of a land where this was *not* so. For the rest of his life, the words 'Turk' and 'Barbarian' would forever be synonymous—the only positive point he ever conceded about Turks at all was written in 1831, the year of his death.

A brief glance at some of the sources Hegel used for his knowledge of the Muslim world, including some of the articles which appeared in the local newspaper he edited for over a year, throw an interesting light not just on the backwardness of Turks in Hegel's world-view, but also on his conviction of Islam's disappearance "from the stage of world history".

Inevitably, these sources divide into two—texts we know Hegel read because he cited them in his work, and then (less reliably) texts Hegel may have read, if only because we know he had them in his possession. In the catalogue of books compiled for Hegel's library in Berlin after his death, a number of Orientalist works can be found: Niebuhr, an early book on Habsburg Spain and the Ottoman Balkans by the famous historian Leopold Ranke (*Fürsten und Völker in Süd Europas* [1827])—Hegel had read enough Ranke to be able express ambiguous praise of his attention to detail in a late lecture¹⁷), not to mention the entire fifteen volumes of the German translation of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Possibly the most interesting title to be found amongst the books Hegel left behind is an Ottoman-friendly account of the Turks written by a former French consul to the Turkish city of Smyrna (Izmir), Charles de Peyssonel. Effectively a critique of another commentary on the Turks (this time written by a man called Volney), de Peyssonel describes Turkey as "a great and illustrious nation" populated by a "spiritual and intelligent people".¹⁸ The critique de Peyssonel makes of his rival commentator is interesting—whilst de Peyssonel certainly offers no impassioned defense of the sophistication of Ottoman culture (as Goethe's Diez had in the last chapter), he is still angry with Volney for having no knowledge of Turkish, and subsequently no real knowledge of the Ottomans ("Has he studied the Turks? Has he talked to the people of the place, with the members of the government, with their literati?", p. 21). Had Hegel read the book, he would have witnessed the page-by-page demolition of one European's stereotypical and ill-informed views on the Ottomans by another. Naturally, we have no way of knowing whether Hegel ever even glanced through the book, apart from the fact that it sat on his library shelf for an uncertain number of years.

One historian whose work Hegel did know was the Swiss scholar and diplomat Johannes von Müller, whose *Universal History* (*Allgemeine Geschichte*) Hegel had personally requested in an 1817 letter, and recommended to Niethammer and Roth.¹⁹ In von Müller, Hegel would have found not merely a fairly positive description of the Ottoman Empire (Turks are repeatedly described as fighting “heroically” *heldenmütig*²⁰), but also an impression of its significance for modern European history—each of the last eight sections of Müller’s *History* has, without exception, a chapter on the Turks. The Turkish-Russian war of 1768 is given a good half-dozen pages, including a mention of Russian atrocities inflicted on the Turkish population (p. 578). Moreover, Müller’s historical accounts are often laced with anecdotes and stories which convey a sophisticated and witty impression of the Turks—for example, Müller tells us how the Grand Vizier Ibrahim, on learning of his imminent execution, refused to make the customary final prayer, with the remark: “I only have a minute to live—why should I take the trouble?” (p. 540). Whatever convictions Hegel might have had of the Turks’ barbarism and Islam’s contemporary irrelevance, it is difficult to imagine them coming from the *Universal History* of Johannes von Müller.

One might imagine Hegel’s unwillingness to attribute any degree of culture, humour or political significance to Europe’s nearest Muslim neighbours came from one of his most formative influences, Gibbon—after all, it was the English historian who famously attributed the decline of the Roman Empire to the rise of Islam (as Said himself points out²¹), and Hegel had read *Decline and Fall* in Berne when he was still in his early and impressionable twenties. Gibbon’s description of Islam as “one of the most memorable revolutions”,²² his extended description of the Arabian climate and emphasis on the “personal free[dom]” of the Arab (p. 160) must have either influenced Hegel or reinforced a set of already similar associations in him. Once again, however, what Hegel would also have found in Gibbon is a much more complicated picture of the Turks than Gibbon’s critics generally allow. Although the Englishman certainly had plenty of negative things to say about the Ottomans—whose empire he described as “the growth of a monster” (p. 810)—Gibbon’s attention to detail results in a number of surprisingly positive moments in his depiction of the “barbarians”: the attention he gives both to the various Muslim–Christian alliances of the period (such as that of Kantakouzenos with Umur of Aydin, p. 812) as well as the many Christians who fought for the Turks (pp. 837, 840); his sober and fair portraits of sultans such as Bajazet (pp. 822–24, 841) and unusual emphasis on their education (p. 859). None of this appears to have had any influence on Hegel, whose “Turkish emperors” were of the kind that saw and fell in love with Christian maidens, spent four weeks of infatuation with them and then had them killed before moving on to the next.²³ It was as if Hegel had absorbed the symbolic content of Gibbon, so to speak, but left out the minutiae.

Out of fairness to Hegel, this picture of a thinker who only selected the nuggets of negativity he needed from his reading of the Muslim world, but left out the positive, should not be exaggerated. In the articles of the *Edinburgh Review*, for instance, especially in the years Hegel read it with particular diligence (1817–1820), it is difficult to find any positive information Hegel might have ‘filtered out’: tales abound of Tartars and Kalmucks who “stew their meat between their bums” before eating it, predictably savage and bloodthirsty accounts of Turks and Albanians, underpinned by descriptions of Venice as “the great bulwark of Christendom . . . against the advances of the Mahometans”.²⁴ To a lesser extent, the same might be said for some of the sources Hegel used for his abrupt and extremely dismissive history of Arab philosophy. One such source was Johann Buhle, whose *Lehrbuch* Hegel drew on for his own lectures on the history of philosophy. Buhle’s conviction of the “fanaticism” (*Schwärmerei*) of the Oriental, and their blind admiration of and slavish dependency on Aristotle,²⁵ were unlikely to challenge any preconceptions about Arab thinkers Hegel had. It should also be said, however, that the more positive points Buhle makes about Islamic philosophy—his admiration for Averroes, the six pages he devotes to the “free-thinker” (*Selbstdenker*) Avicenna, and his lament that our estimation of Arab thought is limited by the few documents we have about it²⁶—Hegel appears to have passed over, choosing instead to give Averroes and Avicenna one line a piece in his lectures.

The discernment and evaluation of influence (or, in our case, non-influence) in a thinker’s work is a speculative and serpentine affair, one which forever borders on the intuitive, at times even the apophatic. The aim of this section is not to convey how ‘evil’ Hegel was for ignoring his positive sources, but more modestly to show how Hegel’s attitude towards the Muslim world was neither textually nor epistemologically inevitable. Hegel’s savage Turks, fanatical Arabs and historically defunct Islam were interpretative choices, not ‘child-of-his-time’ consequences of his reading or *milieu*. The best example of the hermeneutical decision-making Hegel employed in his approach to the Muslim world—and his conviction of its disappearance “from the stage of history”—can be found in the articles Hegel himself had printed in the local newspaper he edited between March 1807 to October 1808.

The *Bamberger Zeitung* was a four-page provincial daily which Hegel took over after having just finished the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in Jena the previous winter. It was made up each day of a selection of different reports taken from a variety of newspapers, German and non-German, and compiled by the editor to produce an impressively cosmopolitan level of news for a local paper (reports came from as far away as Rome, London, New York, St. Petersburg and—on a regular basis—Constantinople).²⁷ For the purposes of our own chapter, three points are of relevance: firstly (and most significantly), the considerable level of coverage given under Hegel’s editorship to events in the Ottoman world. In some issues—such as April

6—news reports concerning Turkish events took up over *half* of the paper. An article from August 20, 1807, detailing the successor to the overthrown Sultan Selim III, took up over two pages—basically the entire inner section of the paper. At least once, sometimes twice a week, Hegel included for his Bamberg readership a substantial report on some aspect of Ottoman politics—ongoing tensions between Turks and Serbs, developments in the war between Russia and Turkey, diplomatic negotiations with the English, changes in administration, executions of viziers.²⁸ If Hegel's Islam had disappeared from the stage of history, it certainly did not vanish from the pages of the *Bamberger Zeitung*.

The second point of relevance concerns the level of detail the reports on Turkey in Hegel's newspaper displayed, a profusion of Muslim names and Turkish terms which would not be equalled today in any European newspaper, national or provincial. In one October issue, for example, we find a remarkably long list of Turkish names provided to outline the changes made in the Ottoman cabinet:

In the second half of September several important demands and changes took place in the Royal offices of the Ottoman court, amongst which being the appointment of the recently-dismissed Grand Vizier Halim Ibrahim Effendi as Pasha of Saloniki; one of the last supporters of the *nizam-cedid* . . . Celebi Mustapha Effendi, became Kyahaya Bey (Minister of the Interior). In his place as Terfana Emini, Chancellor of the Admiralty, came Yusuf Agdian Effendi. (October 28, 1807)

One has to wonder what the local Bamberger made of such a flood of exotic particulars. The comprehensiveness of the reports was not simply limited to names—in the month of August alone we find some fairly in-depth descriptions of Wahabi victories over the Ottomans (August 23), a detailed account of the mechanisms behind the conservatives' coup against the Sultan (August 20) and the entrance of Sultan Mustapha IV into an Egyptian mosque (August 23), not to mention some lengthy descriptions of how "the constitution of the Ottoman Empire should be re-installed" (August 22). All of these Hegel, as editor, had to read and proofread (or in some cases translate from the French) for his local readership.

A third and final point of relevance concerns the perspective or bias of the Ottoman reports Hegel collected from different newspapers. Although Hegel promised, on taking up the job, not to allow his own political opinions to disturb the "impartiality" of the newspaper, scholars have shown Hegel's own Napoleonic sympathies to have played a significant part in bolstering the paper's already pro-French bias.²⁹ Hegel's own low opinion of the Ottomans, however (in 1802 he considered the "Turkish Sultan" to be the head of "an unrestricted despotism"³⁰) did not produce an overwhelmingly diabolical picture of the Turk in his newspaper—on the contrary, some of the articles Hegel chose to reproduce in the *Bamberger*

Zeitung were actually quite pro-Turkish. Amongst the reports Hegel culled and inserted during his editorship, we find criticism of the “deceitful proposals” (*hinterlistige Vorschläge*) the English cabinet made to the Turks in their negotiations (October 2), an account of the Russian destruction of the Ottoman-held island of Tenedos and the burning of its houses (October 23), a sympathetic report of how 270 Turkish soldiers were disarmed and then killed by Serbs (April 5). Some of the reports were even written by Turks themselves—a detailed two-page account of the struggle between conservatives and reformists in the Ottoman capital appeared in the *Bamberger Zeitung* on August 22, 1807, written by an anonymous Ottoman and dated “in the year of the Hegira, 1222” (how many of Hegel’s Schwabian readers would have understood this is hard to say).

The period Hegel occupied the editorship of the *Bamberger Zeitung* (1807–1808) was a particularly crucial moment for the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan Selim III was in the middle of trying (with French assistance) to bring in Western economic and military reforms into the Muslim empire, reforms were strongly opposed by the conservative *ulema* and which became known as the *nizam-cedid* or “new order”. The term *nizam-cedid* appeared a number of times in the *Bamberger Zeitung*, and given Hegel’s own Francophilic efforts to reform the various German versions of the *ancien regime*, he could hardly have been disinterested in the loosely analogous version of his struggle taking place in Istanbul. Hegel, as a firm supporter of the Napoleonic cause, would also have been aware of the fact—as his own newspaper put it—that the Ottoman state showed a tremendous “preference and bias” (*Vorliebe und Parteilichkeit*) for the French, and their modernizing reforms were deeply influenced by them.³¹ The considerable amount of coverage Hegel, as editor, gave to Ottoman Turkey’s reform struggles may well have been made with this particular unfolding of the *Weltgeist* in mind.

We have dwelt at some length on Hegel’s knowledge of the Muslim world, and particularly on Hegel’s knowledge of Ottoman events, primarily because Hegel wrote so little about it. An absence or omission means nothing in itself, until one learns more about the background against which it is set. The disappearance of Hegel’s Islam from the stage of world history (*von dem Boden der Weltgeschichte*)—the fact that Hegel hardly remarked at all upon the Ottomans—means relatively little until the greater store of knowledge Hegel could have drawn on is brought to mind. In his editorial capacity alone, Hegel must have read at least eighty articles on the Ottoman world between March 1807 and October 1808. His non-philosophical interest in the Ottomans would continue long after—as late as 1829, we find Hegel remarking in a letter how, reading a newspaper together with Schelling in a Karlsbad coffeehouse, they learnt of the taking of Adrianople and the end of the Russo-Turkish war.³² In the very last year of his life (1831), Hegel criticised the English treatment of Irish Catholics with the reproach that “even the Turks have mostly allowed their Christian/Armenian/Jewish

subjects the use of their churches”.³³ Hegel’s writings may well have been largely Turk-free, but the spectre of an established, sophisticated and distinctly unbarbaric Muslim culture next door to Europe would forever cause problems for the Christian and European bias of his teleology.

HEGEL THE ENLIGHTENMENT THINKER: ISLAM AS INCOMPLETE AND ABSTRACT *AUFKLÄRUNG*

The individual, the Muslim, is not like the European, who has a variety of viewpoints. If the European is a convolution of diverse relationships, the Muslim is one whole and only this one.

—*Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*³⁴

When some of the adjectives Hegel attributes to Islam are listed next to one another—abstract, energetic, sublime, lethargic, fanatical, pure, negative, poetic, free and savage—we can begin to see how many different registers Hegel used to talk about Islam and its followers. If in 1821 Arabs are described as an “uneducated people” (*ungebildeten Völkern*³⁵), a year later in the lectures on world history they are responsible for “the blossoming of poetry and all the sciences”.³⁶ Like Herder before him, Hegel had some difficulty synthesizing his feelings towards a faith which was sometimes a disseminator of culture, and sometimes an annihilator of it.

When Hegel the Enlightenment thinker—by which we mean, the interlocutor of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, the Hegel whose keywords were *Bildung* and ‘consciousness’, the Hegel whose goal for mankind was the self-comprehension and actualization of freedom through successive meditations with Otherness—when Hegel as a thinker of freedom and the individual wrote about Islam, probably the single feature he mentioned more than anything else was its abstraction. In the lectures on religion, Islam is seen as a faith where “humanity relates itself to the One as purely abstract self-consciousness”.³⁷ After 1817, Hegel appears to have emphasized this Islamic hatred of detail and particularity whenever he mentioned the faith—be it in the pages of the *Enzyklopädie*, or any of his lectures on aesthetics, world history or the philosophy of history.

In constantly using the term ‘abstract’ to critique Islam Hegel is, of course, reiterating his own criticism of Kant. When we read Hegel’s description of the spirit- and content-emptying negativity of the Islamic One, it calls to mind his own remarks on Kant’s noumenal reality—the ‘thing-in-itself’, and Hegel’s reservations: “It is easy to see what is left [over], namely, what is *completely abstract*, or totally *empty*, and determined only as what is ‘beyond’; the *negative* of representation”.³⁸ Emptiness, abstraction and negativity: three qualities shared by both Kantian and Islamic resistance to representation. For the third time (after Herder’s Prussian prophet and Goethe’s Koranic categorical imperative) Kant and Islam are brought

together—this time not to decry a besotted readership or emphasize a universal ethic, but to express frustration at a certain epistemological renunciation. At times, Hegel makes the point quite explicitly; in one 1824 lecture, we are told how Islam “is the religion of the Enlightenment, of reflection, of abstract thinking, which means in fact that the truth cannot be cognized, cannot be known”.³⁹ This aversion to the particular, this insistence on the emptying process of abstraction, is what relegates both Kant and the Koran to the status of preliminaries with regards to the greater this-worldly sensitivity of Hegel and the Bible.

For Hegel the philosopher, Islam would forever be this monochrome, amorphous, expansive entity, a monodimensional power whose explosive growth in the Mediterranean lay precisely in an absence of complexity—Islam being, Hegel insists, a “more primitive” system than that of Christianity.⁴⁰

This lack of inner richness and depth, which Hegel was sometimes able to redescribe positively as the “self-identical clarity of Islam”,⁴¹ was also valid for Muslims themselves. It is in this sense that Hegel’s European identity formed a clear sub-register within the rational vocabulary he used to talk about the Muslim world. The very Christian victory of Lepanto was a triumph not merely against Muslims and unbelievers, but also one which saved “the whole of Europe from the inundation of barbarians” (*die Überschwemmung der Barbaren*).⁴² Hegel spends a page in the early *Spirit of Christianity* explaining how the individual Arab belongs to the whole, whilst the whole is simultaneously represented in the individual Arab—in contrast to today’s Europe (*im jetzigen Europa hingegen*), where every individual represents himself, and not the state to which he belongs.⁴³ Reflectivity, creativity and productivity also differentiates Europeans from Turks—whose baggy trousers, Hegel tells us, would be most unsuited to our “lively and busy” lifestyle⁴⁴—and other non-Europeans. Nothing irritated Hegel more than the blurring of the present-day borders between Europe and Turkey. In 1809, while Hegel was still a schoolteacher in the southern German town of Nuremberg, the Napoleonic war against the Austrians was raging, and some of the local men were sent south to fight in Bavaria. Hegel learnt that many of the soldiers were convinced:

that they had long since marched through Bavaria, had also put Austria behind them, and now found themselves in Turkey, for the war was allegedly against the Turk. As it later emerged, these people hadn’t even left the borders of Bavaria, and so they mistook Bavaria for Turkey and the local Bavarians for Muslims! It is clear from all of this that we need to teach the geography of the Fatherland in the schools, in order to avoid similar misunderstandings in the future.⁴⁵

Given that Hegel often considered Bavaria “Barbaria”, the remark is ironic (when Schelling gave a lecture there on his philosophy in 1807, Hegel said it was like producing wine in the Arabian desert⁴⁶). However, for all his critique

of Kantian-Fichtean “monochromatic formalism”,⁴⁷ Hegel the Enlightenment thinker shared an equally Kantian desire to police and patrol the boundaries of Europe as a place of Reason, Reflection and Freedom. Unlike Kant, however (who was largely untroubled by philology), Hegel’s commitment to the empirical details of culture and context would make the *topos* of Europe more difficult to demarcate. Hegel’s remark is, of course, semi-humorous here—but beneath the joke lies the anxiety that the differences between Europe and non-Europe, between one stage of the World-Spirit and another, may be neither as visible nor as substantial as required. This anxiety is not simply Schlegel’s anxiety, the anxiety of etymology (‘What if the origins of Europe lie wholly outside Europe?’), but also a deeper sense of unease that development has taken place outside the areas Hegel designated, to the extent that one might confuse one stage with another, or not even see the difference at all. Regardless of whether it is Hegel’s late acknowledgment of Ottoman tolerance or, more anecdotally, his mistaking the Greek prince for “a Persian or a Turk” at the Vienna opera,⁴⁸ the attempt to imbue Europe with a sense of world-historical destiny would forever be unsettled by such insidious possibilities of similarity.

In fairness to Hegel, there were certainly moments when his Enlightenment voice appeared to see Christianity as just another religion alongside Islam, and was even able to mention injustices committed upon Muslims which a more Christian eye might have overlooked. In the early writings we see morality described as a central aim (*Hauptzweck*) of religion, with Christ and “Mahomet” mentioned in the same sentence⁴⁹; in the lectures on the philosophy of religion, the “wars of Mohammedans” are placed alongside the “wars of religion between Catholics and Protestants” as parallel examples of what happens when faith becomes coercive state violence.⁵⁰ In the aesthetics lectures, moreover, both the Koran and “our New Testament” are said to be works which “limit themselves to the religious side”; both Islam and Christianity, we are told, fail to give enough independence and individual substance to their angels and other personified entities, which results in them being “cold and abstract”.⁵¹ This occasional willingness to consider Christianity every bit as finite a phenomenon as Islam also leads Hegel to lament some of its historical failures, albeit in a much more moderate tone than Herder’s fiery anti-imperialist diatribes. The Spanish Inquisition is briefly condemned for its persecution of “local Jews, Moors and heretics”,⁵² whose coercion ensured that “every Spaniard wanted to be of Christian blood” (*ibid.*). Hegel spares no criticism in describing the Crusades’ murder of Jewish populations and the sacking of Constantinople—the Crusaders finally reach their goal and bow down before the Holy Sepulchre “still dripping with the blood of the slaughtered inhabitants of Jerusalem”.⁵³ Nevertheless, Hegel’s critique of the Crusades, unlike Herder, is primarily metaphysical, not humanitarian; the reproachable futility of the Crusades lay in its ignorance of the fact that “the definite embodiment it was seeking was to be looked for in subjective consciousness alone, and in

no external object" (ibid.). Hegel's Crusaders, effectively, were looking for Truth in a tomb, instead of in themselves. For all the Enlightenment thinker's genuine disgust at the sanguinity of the 'Holy Wars', their blindness to this ontological truth, rather than the massacres of Jews, Muslims and Eastern Christians, constitutes the "essential interest" of the Crusades.⁵⁴

HEGEL THE BOURGEOIS TOWNSMAN: ISLAM AS SOCIAL VACUUM

Abstraction swayed the minds of the Mohammedans . . . *La religion et la terreur* was the principle in this case, as with Robespierre, *la liberté et la terreur*.⁵⁵

A consideration of Hegel's social status—his middle-class family background of pastors and duchy administrators, his marriage into a minor aristocratic family and, ultimately, his status as a full professor in Berlin—is helpful in considering the political framework in which he occasionally chose to place Islam. This is not to reproduce Marx's by now infamous reduction of Hegel to a mere tool of the Prussian restoration, but merely to point out how Hegel's spiritual and intellectual investment in the social structure he served inevitably led him to view certain aspects of Islam as not only proletarian but fundamentally anarchic.

Although a sense of class certainly coloured Hegel's descriptions of Muslims, there is nothing as explicit as the "Asiatic peasants" who marched upon Leibniz's Vienna. Hegel's references to Turks as "barbarians" and Arabs as "thieving" (*rauberisch*⁵⁶) do suggest a generic mob-like entity, albeit one which probably had more to do with *ethnos* than Allah, particularly when we consider the strikingly milder tone Hegel adopts when writing about Persians. The Bashkiri Muslims who were advancing upon Hegel's town in 1813 were certainly seen by Hegel as animals, although this is hardly surprising, given wartime conditions and Hegel's own sympathy for their enemy, Napoleon. In May 1813, Hegel and his wife were in Nuremberg where a large Prusso-Russian force was in the vicinity, an alliance of the Prussians and Tsar Alexander I against the French. In the Allied armies were thousands of Russian Muslims—Bashkiri Turks from central Asia for the most part, the very same Bashkiris Goethe had received a copy of a page of the Koran from as they passed through Weimar that year. It is interesting to compare the two men's reactions—whereas Goethe had arranged the local school to be temporarily converted into a mosque for the Bashkiri officers, both Hegel and his wife were filled with fear and dismay. Hegel, in a letter to his friend Niethammer, even relates a strange dream his wife had:

she dreamt she found herself in a huge camp just outside Paris, full of wild soldiers, Cossacks, Prussians, all mixed together. She was ter-

rified—but you rode through the turmoil on a horse next to her and made a way through; whenever they hemmed close around her, you reached down from your horse and gestured, that she was under your protection . . . I was a little concerned in this story about the fact that I didn't appear in it at all. My wife excused herself by saying that I was part of her in the dream; and it certainly pleases me to think that under your protection you brought us home to safety through all those Chuvashes and Bashkiris.⁵⁷

Through a sea of largely Muslim and Cossack soldiers, Hegel's friend guides his wife. The philosopher's account of his wife's dream, and the sexual threat implicit as the crowd of "Chuvashes and Bashkiris" gathers around her, offers an interesting comment on what Hegel doubtless saw as the reactionary gathering of Slavic/Asian forces to stop the Napoleonic movement of history. Without plunging into too deep a psychoanalytical reading, the emasculating consequence this has for Hegel himself (which he admits to at one embarrassed point in the letter) reveals a telling anxiety about Hegel's own inability to control events.⁵⁸ Contrary to what he had hoped, the Napoleonic armies of Hegel's *Weltgeist* were wiped off the map by the Russian Tsar and his army of Cossacks and Bashkiris. The "turmoil" of the chaotic, pressing mob of Russians and Muslims, jostling around his innocent wife, encapsulates the kind of feelings Hegel had about a modern, democratic Europe which had to emerge against a whole series of feudal despotisms, both internal as well as Oriental.

Hegel was neither an anarchist nor a devoted monarchist but what we would probably call today a bourgeois liberal democrat. The complexity of Hegel's various political positions have already been remarked upon—the Hegel who could effectively side with King Wilhelm I against democratic reform (in 1817) was also the Hegel who confessed, every year, to toasting the French Revolution on the anniversary of the Bastille.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the university professor who could illegally paddle down a river in the middle of the night to visit the jail window of a student imprisoned for political reasons was also a *very* well-paid academic who (in the words of one biographer) led a "cozy, 'Biedermeyer' lifestyle", was well integrated into the better social circles of his city and enjoyed a position of considerable prestige and hierarchical power.⁶⁰ Hegel's bourgeois politics, in this sense, was the politics of a lawyer's son—the cause of advancing the interests of an emerging middle class at the expense of an antiquated and premodern aristocracy, a cause whose emphasis on *Bildung* would forever distance it from any notion of populism or 'will-of-the-people'. Any consideration of Hegel's pronouncements on Robespierre and Islam—on the "Revolution of the East"—have to keep this tension between revolution and reform in mind.

Whenever Hegel's bourgeois fears came to the fore in his treatment of Islam, he gave a political twist to the Islamic version of Kantian formalism

and abstraction he had already formulated, radicalizing it further still and ultimately seeing in the emptiness of Islam a kind of socio-political vacuum in which everything was levelled. The oneness of the Islamic God led to “the destruction of all differences” (*die Zerstörung aller Unterschiede*⁶¹)—a definition through which Islam did not simply threaten Hegel’s society, but much more fundamentally challenged his entire notion of identity. In Islam:

All bonds disappear. In this oneness all individuality of the Orient falls away, all caste differences, all birthrights. No positive right, no political limitations of the individual is available. Property and ownership, all individual purposes are null and void . . . and this invalidity, in manifesting itself, becomes destructive and devastating.⁶²

Hegel appeared to draw his conviction of Islam’s radical antipathy to class not merely from the *Bilderverbot* and a theological emphasis on monism, but also from historical precedents. The Ottomans and the Mameluks—both being, in Hegel’s words, “dynasties founded by slaves” (*ibid.*)—served as well-established examples of a kind of anarchic tendency within Islam. To Hegel, for whom the words ‘master’ and ‘slave’ clearly had a very particular (dialectical) resonance, this erasure of the difference between *Herr* and *Sklave* was tantamount to semantic nihilism, one which threatened to transform history from a progressive development of opposites into an endless series of tautologies. In Hegel’s Islam, “the individual can be a slave one moment and a prince over far-reaching kingdoms the next” (*ibid.*). Hegel’s denial of history to Islam stemmed, in part, from what he perceived to be its erasure of the very social differences which enabled Hegel’s concept of history to progress.

Clearly, Hegel’s association of Islam with the French Revolution drew on a long tradition of Orientalizing social revolt going back to Kant and Luther (in the wake of the Peasant’s Revolt of 1525, Luther said their leader “wanted to become a new Turkish emperor”⁶³). What also links Hegel to this tradition, however, is a conviction of the nomadic, errant nature of the ‘Mohammedan’, a primordial homelessness which found its precedent in Lutheran definitions of the Arabs as a people “who do not stay in one definite place”,⁶⁴ and whose constantly mobile indifference to place and context inspired both the bourgeois anxieties and (as we shall see) the Romantic proclivities of Hegel at different times. Hegel’s conviction of the dizzying Heraclitean flux of Islam is striking—he returns to its detail-blurring vortex again and again:

With all the passionate interest he shows, the Mohammedan is really indifferent to this social fabric, and rushes on in the ceaseless whirl of fortune . . . on this boundless sea there is a continual onward movement; nothing abides firm.⁶⁵

In the lectures on the history of philosophy, where Hegel essentially comments on Maimonides' paraphrasing of the Ismaili philosophers (even to the extent of using Hebrew terms in place of the original Arabic—*Medaberim* for *Mutakallim*, *Assaria* instead of *Asharites*), the Ismaili tenet that everything is possible in the mind (a man can be as big as a mountain, a flea as big as an elephant) leads Hegel to a judgement of "complete errancy" (*vollkommenen Unbestand*), a "perfect dissolution of all contexts".⁶⁶ For Hegel, it did not matter whether this studied evaporation of the particular was theological (as with the Ismailis or the *Bilderverbot*) or political, as in the case of Mohammed's "revolution"—its occurrence infinitized human possibility in the worst possible way, turning both God and man into an Oriental *tabula rasa* onto which any fanatical credo could be scribbled and instantly acquire the status of Truth. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel had insisted that "contextualizing oneself with others is the end of being for oneself".⁶⁷ Hegel's dedication to this word context—*Zusammenhang*—as a kind of bond which replaces our self-identity with an interactive and mutually dependent one, perhaps best explains why the nomadic, classless, image-hating, context-fleeing 'Mohammedan' appeared to give the university professor, in certain moments, such cause for concern.

HEGEL THE "LAST CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER": ISLAM AS COMPETITOR AND JEWISH VARIANT

With the rise of Protestantism, all schisms within the Catholic Church came to an end. Now the truth of Christianity is being proved, but we don't know for whom—for we don't have the Turk to deal with.

—*Aphorisms* (1803–1806)⁶⁸

Before examining what Hegel had to say about Muslims when his Christian voice found its moments of primacy, we should issue a crucial caveat—namely, that Hegel saw his own Protestant Christianity as largely synonymous with a vocabulary of Enlightenment and education ("Our universities and schools are our churches"⁶⁹), and sometimes even seemed to see himself as a Luther figure, teaching philosophy to speak German.⁷⁰ Of course, Hegel's own conviction of his thought-system's religious compatibility was far from accepted in his day—Kierkegaard offering probably the most famous objection to Hegel's relegation of Faith to a lower rung beneath Philosophy; nevertheless, Löwith's definition of Hegel as the "last Christian philosopher" indicates a thinker who saw a close relationship between the advance of modernity and the advance of the Protestant faith. The kind of moments we found in Leibniz and Kant—Muslims sometimes as enemies of Progress, sometimes as enemies of Christ—are not as clearly separable in Hegel. For Hegel, the doctrine of the Trinity was itself a moment of progress in the development of the World-Spirit, a "life-process . . . in which

the universal places itself over and against itself".⁷¹ It is in this sense that Islam's rejection of the divinity of Christ as the embodiment of the universal in the particular was both a denial of Christian doctrine and a refusal of this necessary step towards Absolute Knowledge.

Having said this, there are moments in Hegel's oeuvre where Muslims emerge primarily as non-Christians, and occasionally even as anti-Christians. If Hegel the Enlightenment thinker was a reader of Fichte, Kant and Schelling, then Hegel's Christian identity was a devotee of Tasso and Ariosto. In such moments, an emphasis shifts from Islam as an incomplete, almost 'preliminary' transcendental monotheism to a competitive, oppositional one. In the 1824 lectures on religion we find:

In [the Mohammedan religion] Christianity finds its opposite [*Gegensatz*] because it occupies a sphere equivalent to that of the Christian religion [*in gleicher Sphäre*]. It is a spiritual religion like the Jewish, but its God is for self-consciousness only with the abstract knowing spirit . . .

The antithesis consists in the fact that in Christianity spirituality is developed concretely within itself and is known as Trinity, as spirit; and that human history, the relationship to the One, is likewise a *concrete* history . . . The religion of Islam, by contrast, hates and proscribes everything concrete.⁷²

The nature of this "equivalent sphere" which Christianity shares with Islam is twofold. The first meaning is the one Hegel deliberates upon—Islam and Christianity as two universal faiths which have not replicated Judaism's mistake of staining an otherwise pure transcendentalism with an all-too-terrestrial particularity (the attachment to a particular land and people). The second, unspoken meaning of Hegel's "sphere", however, which Hegel does not deliberate upon, is intended in a more literal sense—a geographical contiguity, one which turns Islam from a similar yet metaphysically flawed monotheism into a religious, economic and military rival. No one would ever guess such tensions from the notorious paucity of attention Hegel gives to Islam in his treatment of world religion (effectively three sides out of over six hundred pages); Hegel responded to the problematic actuality of Islam in his lectures on religion with the same tools with which he responded to the actuality of the Ottomans in his lectures on history—namely, reduction and circumvention. And yet a whole series of scattered remarks throughout his work testify to an awareness of the rivalry of Islam: the various references to Islam's desire for "world dominion",⁷³ an acknowledgment of Islam's more numerous adherents—and an equally brief acknowledgment of Islam's having come *after* Christianity, an early affirmation of the need to convert "Jews and especially Mohammedans" (and even an ironic speculation that the "Turkish Kaiser" could become Pope), not to mention an awareness of how "Christian chivalry" was responsible for "driving out

Moors, Arabs and Muslims in general from the Christian lands”.⁷⁴ Although the Enlightenment Hegel saw the Crusades in general as a metaphysically futile exercise, an irreducibly Christian element within his persona would always respond to the ‘liberation’ of Jerusalem or Roland’s struggles against the Saracens with a certain fervour.

Hegel’s Christian identity also emerges in the way he occasionally lumps Jews and Muslims together in the same Christ-denying category, albeit for a variety of different, fluctuating reasons: their common need for conversion; the possibility of their statelessness as peoples; a predominance of fear, not love, in their relationship to God; the evaporation of the individual within their respective religions—and a corresponding emptying of the Jew/Muslim’s interiority (“Jews and Arabs are only to be noticed historically and externally”⁷⁵); most importantly, both worship a God “without any content”.⁷⁶ Hegel takes the Kantian emphasis on the emptiness of the Jewish/Islamic God and turns it this time not into political subversion but metaphysical blindness, quoting with approval Böhme’s “you blind Turks, Jews and Pagans”⁷⁷ as a reproof for their common rejection of the Trinity. Thus, an ignorance of the true meaning of the death of Christ—as a moment where “God has made himself identical with what is alien to him in order to put it to death”⁷⁸—becomes coterminous with an ignorance of how identity incorporates negativity through the othering of itself. Not only does Hegel Christianise the Judaeo-Islamic inability to fully grasp the particular, he also translates their classic obstinacy to the divinity of Christ in terms of his own system. Spiritual ignorance becomes philosophical ignorance.

The moments in which Hegel sees the Muslim as a more recent version of the Jew are quite striking, even if a notion of race and *Sprache* here is as much at work as a notion of faith. In Hegel’s potted history of Islamic philosophy, Arabic terms are not merely referred to in Hebrew, but are even introduced to the German reader with Hebrew characters in brackets—the Mutazilites (מטאזיליטות), the Asharites (אשריטות) and the Mutakallimun (מטקאללמון).⁷⁹ Even taking into account Hegel’s reliance on Maimonides as a possible explanation for the otherwise absurd step of supplementing Islamic terms with their Hebrew ‘originals’, it seems clear Hegel (who seems to have had a minimal knowledge of Arabic⁸⁰) saw no great disparity in using Hebrew to explain the philosophy of the Islamic tradition.

Despite the common blindness to the concrete development of the Idea which Hegel attributes to both Jews and Muslims, there are a number of moments where Muslims are privileged over Jews as being not blind but merely myopic. A passage from the 1822 lectures on history sums up best the hierarchy of the three religions:

The One of the Orient is much more the One of Judaism, which, completed in Islam [*im Islam vollendet*], becomes the religion of the Orient.

Known as this One, as inwardly determining itself in Christianity, it is the other means of completion. This Oneness finds its fulfilment and determination ultimately in Christianity.⁸¹

In one sense, Hegel's Islam can be seen as an improved version of Judaism (being, as Hegel puts it, "cleansed of any nationalism"⁸²) and also an incomplete version of Christianity. It is no longer limited "to a particular people"⁸³ and since it, like Christianity, has annihilated any particularity in its concept of God, it finds itself at a halfway point between the prototype of Judaism and the Ideal of Christianity—a transcendentalism laudably cleansed of any terrestrial particularity but which, however, has yet to develop a *concrete* spirituality. By this time (1824–1827) Hegel had encountered and become familiar with a number of Sufi writings (through the translations of Hammer and Rückert). As a central idea in Sufism is the interdependence of the transcendental God (*tanzih*) and the immanent (*tashbih*), it is interesting to see how Hegel consciously decides to leave his interpretation of an Islam obsessed with abstraction as it is, even though at the same time in his aesthetics lectures, as we shall see, his theories on the development of romantic poetry were having to be modified to accommodate what Hegel termed "modern Muslims".

HEGEL THE ROMANTIC: ISLAM'S SHIFT FROM MONSTROUS CONQUEST TO BLOSSOMING CULTURE

Although Hegel continued, throughout his life, to see Muslims in general as "uneducated peoples" (1821), "savage" and "lacking reflection" (1824), and Arabia itself to be a "realm of fanaticism" whose cities were attacked by "thieving Arabs" and which "even today are swarming with . . . roaming nomads" (1830), when it came to the question of aesthetics Hegel followed convention by adopting a very different voice.⁸⁴ "Mohammedan" poetry, we are told in the *Encyclopaedia*, offers an awareness of the One "in its most beautiful purity and sublimity".⁸⁵ In the lectures on aesthetics, Arabs have "a poetic nature", one capable of producing a canon reminiscent of "the romantic character of Spanish chivalry".⁸⁶ No longer savages lacking reflection, Persians and Arabs provide us through "the Oriental splendour of their images, the free sanctity of their imagination, a shining example for the present itself and today's subjective inwardness".⁸⁷ This by-now familiar coexistence of brute and sage, fanatic and poet, we shall now examine—and in particular, two questions: how did Hegel's poetic-Romantic vocabulary contradict and vie for primacy with his other voices? and how did Hegel's aestheticisation of the "Mohammedan" differ from its precedents in Goethe, Schlegel and above all, Herder?

To a limited extent, Hegel's Romantic approach to the Muslim world was in convergence with his other discursive identities—those of

Enlightenment, religion and race. The “Mohammedan” disdain for representation and evacuation of the deity which could facilitate the blind devotion of the fanatic (not to mention the anarchic rage of the revolutionary) would also be the basis for the faith’s “grandiose sublimity”.⁸⁸ The absence of an image, in other words, may have brought about a negative freedom, but it also enabled a very artistic one. As we shall see in the next section, some contestable element of race also seems to be involved in Hegel’s discussion of the innate sublimity of Arabs (in which he follows Herder), not to mention in Hegel’s fairly striking sympathy for Persia and Persians, a sympathy not necessarily connected to their Islamic faith.

When Hegel’s gaze towards the Muslim world was directed by the priorities of the aesthetic, a number of its aspects either modified themselves, shifted their emphasis or, in some cases, were wholly transformed into something completely different. Fanatical deeds became acts of sublimity, devastating conquests morphed into moments of extraordinary expansion; thieving bandits and swarming nomads took on a sublime, almost mystical aspect, to become Ossian-like heroes at one in the desert with their tent, horse and open sky.⁸⁹ For the Romantic Hegel, the freedom of the Arab was a *liberté* closer to that of Rousseau than Robespierre. The Hegel who had understood Islam to be a primitive opposite of Christianity, and who could delight at the struggle of El Cid against the Saracens in the defense of a Christian Europe, suddenly becomes a sensitive observer of the affinity between Arab and Gothic architecture in Spain, of the heavy and formative influence of Arab poetry on the “Christian Occident” and of the “blossoming” of Andalusia and the many Christian scholars who studied Arabic and Arab learning there.⁹⁰

The Islam which, in the lectures on history, is so “destructive” and “devastating” (*zerstörend, verwüstend*),⁹¹ vies in the same text with an Islam which “blossoms” (*blühte*) and is always rejuvenating (*verjüngend*)⁹², so mixed do Hegel’s responses to the Muslim world become. When Hegel writes of how the “humblest Saracen could look upon the Caliph as his equal” (*ibid.*), it is not difficult to imagine how some of the more ambiguous feelings Hegel had towards the Romantic fervour of his own revolutionary youth might not have persisted in his descriptions of Islam. As with Herder’s confused description of Mohammed as trader/prophet/poet, Hegel is torn between the critical depiction of a negative, destructive fanaticism—one which had its origins in a series of “monstrous conquests” (*ungeheure Eroberungen*)—and a distinctly Romantic enthusiasm for the rapidity and magnitude of Islam’s expansion (“Never has enthusiasm . . . produced greater deeds”⁹³). In a text such as the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, a curious parallel movement seems to take place, as a whole variety of different adjectives—“monstrous” (*ungeheuer*) and “noble” (*edle*), “enthusiasm” (*Begeisterung*) and “fanaticism” (*Fanatismus*)—seem to pull Hegel in different directions. One

moment, we have a religion whose “energy . . . enters into secular life with a purely negative purpose”⁹⁴; two pages later, the negative purpose is capable of producing moments of unprecedented cultural, artistic and civic magnificence:

Where, however, a noble soul makes itself prominent—like a billow in the surging of the sea—it manifests itself in a majesty of freedom, such that nothing more noble, more generous, more valiant, more devoted was ever witnessed.⁹⁵

Defenders of Hegel will insist to see a contradiction here is to wholly underestimate Hegel’s own awareness of the ambiguous consequences of historical phenomena—in particular, how a religion of sublimity can be both culturally productive and spiritually fanatical. And yet the emphasis placed on destructiveness and negativity at the beginning of Hegel’s section on Islam would unprepare even the most sympathetic reader for the Arab profusion of arts, architecture and sciences which subsequently takes place—and which Hegel describes as a “flourishing” and a “blossoming”. Somehow, Hegel’s own dedication to the teleological inevitability of Christianity would have to deal not only with his own empirical commitment to history, but also to those moments of cultural and military superiority which a more ‘primitive’ religion had given birth to. Amongst Hegel’s many voices, his Romantic identity provided the vocabulary most likely to acknowledge, and even admire, such moments.

Hegel’s idealization of the Arab and his philological sensitivity to the non-European influences on European literature and art was primarily indebted to Herder and, ironically, Schlegel (whom Hegel detested and whose *History of Ancient and Modern Literature* he had clearly read). However, there are two points on which Hegel’s poetic response to the Muslim world differs from the kind of stylizations we find in Herder and Schlegel: first of all, Hegel almost completely resists the temptation to see Mohammed and the birth of Islam as a politically interesting form of proto-nationalism. Whereas Herder, Goethe and Schlegel had all seen Mohammed as someone who had brought his *Volk* together through the instrument of language, Hegel’s decision to interpret Islam as the un-Jewish antithesis of nationalism and the transcendental embodiment of negativity prevented him from such Romantic, anachronistic projections of national consciousness onto an seventh-century Arab faith. Hegel’s omission of this Romantic gesture, it could be said, does seem to suggest a severing of any contemporary political relevance the narrative of Islam might have had for his readership.⁹⁶

Conversely, in the realms of his aesthetic theory, Hegel’s poeticization of the Muslim world goes in precisely the opposite direction. In his appreciation of the Persian poets Rumi and Hafiz, Hegel follows Goethe (and departs from Herder and Schlegel) in a striking acknowledgment of

Muslim poetry's relevance for present-day poetics. The general scheme of Hegel's aesthetic theory will be familiar to many: the primary phase was the *symbolic*, where the corporal or particular form overwhelms the Idea it is manifesting (Hegel allotted Egyptian, Hindu, Hebrew and 'Mohammedan' poetry to this stage). Symbolic poetry tries and fails to find "that perfect unity of inner meaning and external shape"⁹⁷ which really belongs to the second category of art, the *classical*. In the classical (Greek and Roman), a "harmonious unity of content and form" is achieved (*ibid.*); however, for Hegel, this perfect balance between *Äußere* and *Innere* is not the final stage of art in its gradual approach towards the Absolute. The category of *romantic* art, as the moment when the Idea exceeds its representation and "takes flight out of externality back into itself" (*ibid.*), constitutes a new "inwardness" which Hegel saw exemplified in Shakespeare and the Dutch masters.

Hegel's encounter with Persian poetry, both through the *Divan* of his beloved Goethe and through the translations of Rumi and others by Rückert and Hammer, upset what we might tentatively term the Euro-Christo-centric direction of his aesthetic theory—where the Absolute moves from the symbolic peripheries of Egypt, through classical southern Europe, towards its culmination in the romantic traditions of the Christian North. This moment of 'upsetting' should not be exaggerated—as one of the conditions of modern romantic art is a new-found inwardness, a notion of depth and interiority Hegel's Islam hardly excelled in, "Mohammedan poetry" is still largely seen as belonging to the primary stage of the symbolic. Goethe's gesture of East–West fusion, however, certainly made an impact upon Hegel—in an 1828 lecture he was able to declare:

Goethe's West-oriental *Divan* sprang from a Westerner incorporating something Eastern . . . we can feel there the eastern independence of freedom in the smallest things. The substantial element here is also very much present for us today.⁹⁸

The scholar Stemmrich-Köhler, in an exhaustive study of the various versions of Hegel's aesthetics lectures, has argued that Muslim poetry appears to have acquired, for Hegel, the modified status of a symbolic art form revived under the conditions of the romantic (p. 182). Persian poets such as Firdusi, in particular, were not simply another primitive stage of Oriental pantheism, but also were also "fruitful for the modern" (p. 198). For the thinker who was able to leave Islam out of his study of world religion—and the Ottomans out of history—it remains significant that only in an *aesthetic* sense could the contemporaneity of the Muslim world be acknowledged for Hegel. The realm of poetry, unlike those of economy, history or theology, was a relatively safe one, where a foreign culture might be allowed to share a moment of teleological influence without too many problematic implications.

HEGEL AND RACE: ISLAM AS CAUCASIAN RELIGION, MUSLIMS AS WEST ASIANS

Having seen Islam as a crude form of Kantianism, a difference-levelling anarchism, a rival to Christianity, a variation on Judaism and a magnificent experiment in sublimity, Hegel's interest in race (*Rasse/Geschlecht*) leads us to a final permutation in the various patterns we have been analysing—that of Islam as a faith belonging primarily to a Caucasian (*Kaukasische*) set of peoples.

The question of race in Hegel is a touchy one. A number of critics (most notably Bernasconi) have not only begun to emphasize the notion of race in Hegel, but have also argued that the Eurocentrism of Hegel's thought is essentially structured by an understanding of race.⁹⁹ This argumentation has found some resistance from a number of scholars—McCarney, most recently, having preferred to speak of a “geographical materialism” rather than an obsession with *Rasse* in Hegel, and choosing to cite in Hegel's defense the philosopher's opposition to slavery, emphasis on climate rather than blood and conviction of Greece's African influence.¹⁰⁰ The aim of this final section, however, is not to participate in this debate, but rather to examine the points on which an understanding of race in Hegel overlaps with and colours his approach to the Muslim world.

Broadly speaking, Hegel divided humankind into three racial groups: the Ethiopian or African race, the Mongol (in which Hegel, contra Schlegel, included both Indian and Chinese peoples) and the Caucasian race, a term Hegel borrowed from the anthropologist/anatomist Blumenbach.¹⁰¹ Hegel's remarks concerning Africans are notorious enough not to require any elaboration—effectively he saw them, in intellectual and spiritual terms, as grown-up children; the “Mongol” races, on the other hand, whilst still meriting the term ‘childish’, show the beginnings of an awareness of spirituality, but one still tied to a physical, corporeal understanding of it. Genuine history (as opposed to what Hegel termed ‘unhistorical history’¹⁰²) can only really be said to begin with the Caucasian race, a racial group to whom belonged not simply Europeans but all three major Muslim peoples, Arabs, Persians and Turks. The “Caucasian race” itself had two aspects (*zwei Seiten*)—one European, the other ‘West Asian’ (*Vorderasien*), a difference which Hegel saw as “coincid[ing] with that between Christians and Mohammedans”.¹⁰³ Muslims and Christians, in other words, were racial cousins, sharing a common, Caucasian source:

No colour has any superiority, it being simply a matter of being used to it, although one can speak of the objective superiority of the Caucasian race as against that of the Negro. Caucasians, Georgians, etc., are descended from the Turks, and it is amongst these peoples that the finest species are to be found. The finest colour is that in which what is internal is most visible, the colour which is determined outwards,

in an animal manner, from within. . . . In what is flesh coloured . . . spirituality [is] so much the more recognisable. It is this condition, that of what is internal, of animal being and spiritual inwardness making itself more visible, which constitutes the objective superiority of the whiteness of the skin.¹⁰⁴

It is interesting to see how Hegel employed his faintly Aristotelian privileging of actuality over potentiality—the insistence on all inwardness expressing itself through outwardness which Kierkegaard, in *Fear and Trembling*, had objected to—to justify the white skin as an outward emanation of spiritual purity. Darker coloured skins are, metaphysically considered, incomplete actualities. What is also striking is the way Turks are seen as Caucasians by Hegel, not Mongols; Hegel was certainly aware of the Turks' central Asian background (in one list of folk songs, he put "Turkish" alongside "Tatar" and "Mongolian"¹⁰⁵), and many of the qualities he attributes to the Mongol race he also gives to the Turks—a nomadic, destructive nature, a disinclination to build or produce culture. Hegel even used the same word—*Überschwemmung*—to describe the conquests of Turks and Mongols as they spilled over into other lands. The Turks, however, were also Muslims and, as Islam was a Caucasian religion, their faith appears to have been sufficient (at least in this instance) to bring them into 'our' ethnic fold.

How did Hegel's Mohammedans change when they became Caucasian West Asians? What aspects of their character did he emphasize—and which ones did he overlook—when words such as "race" and "ethnic group" (*Menschengeschlecht*) were foremost in his mind? One answer to this is that the racial status of Hegel's Muslims, when emphasized, occasionally brought them over to the 'side' of Christian Europeans, particularly in comparison with 'lower' races such as Mongols or Africans. In his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel writes about the wild and uncontrollable nature of the "Negro" (*der Neger*):

there is nothing in his character which sounds human. The extensive reports of missionaries confirm this perfectly, and Mohammedanism appears to be the only thing which has brought them some degree of education [*Bildung*]. The Mohammedans also understand better than the Europeans how best to penetrate the interior of the continent. This level of culture [the Muslims have brought] can be better recognised in the religion.¹⁰⁶

A number of points emerge here: first of all, how the expansion of Islam into Africa, far from being a "monstrous conquest" or an explosion of fanaticism, actually becomes a disseminator of *Bildung* and a civilizing influence, a purveyor of *Kultur* to the North African coast. Islam, in other words, is helping Africa to move into history—from the ahistorical darkness in which Hegel had notoriously placed it. As we saw in the first chapter, this

gesture is also Leibniz's—the Leibniz who could acknowledge Islam's help in the abolition of Africa's idolatrous, animistic practices—and yet the keywords of *Bildung* and *Kultur* in the passage suggest an Islam which is not merely paving the way for Christian missionaries, but which is providing a superior (Caucasian) religious culture, monotheistic and transcendental, which the fetishistic negro has yet to acquire. The remarkable absence of any competitive tone in this proselytizing scramble for Africa underlines a clear logic: when the race is inferior and its culture 'lower', Islam cleanses and teaches; when the race is superior and its culture 'higher', it conquers, floods and swarms. It is in this sense that Islam's provenance as a Caucasian religion gives it the status of a 'pre-colonizer'—whether it is paving the way for missionaries in Africa or the English in India, Hegel's triadic understanding of race (African/Mongol/Caucasian) appears to have diminished Islam's competitive Otherness in certain moments.

An element of race, and how race made Hegel's Muslims 'more like us', also emerges in the case of Persia, and Hegel's overall positive treatment of it. If Turks are incapable of culture and Arabs forever prone to fanaticism, it seems fair to say Hegel's treatment of Persia and Persians hardly ever strays into the negative. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, spurred by the discovery of Sanskrit and Avestan's proximity to German and Latin (through figures such as Jones and Schlegel), a number of thinkers were looking to Persia as the original homeland (*Urheimat*) of the German people. The philologist Adelung (whom Hegel had read) argued as early as 1806 that Persians and Goths enjoyed a "common derivation" (*ursprüngliche Abstammung*¹⁰⁷), whilst one of the key texts in Hegel's Oriental research—von Hammer's *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens* (1818)—had called Persia "a high intellectual-culture" and a "near-relative of the West".¹⁰⁸ Hammer had even described the Persian epic the *Shahname* and the German *Nibelungenlied* as the sagas of two blood-related peoples (*stammverwandte Völker*).¹⁰⁹ Hegel certainly never went as far as explicitly calling Persia an ancient Teutonic homeland, but his designation of them as "the first historical people",¹¹⁰ his denial of a Caucasian identity extending anywhere east of Afghanistan, and his appreciation of the Persians' whiter skins in comparison to Indians and Mongols strongly suggest some form of racial sympathy for the Persians. The fact that Hegel referred to "Mohammedan Persians" (and not Persian Mohammedans) also seems to underline how Hegel saw Persians as a *Volk* coloured by an Islamic identity, but not necessarily constituted by one in the same way his sublime/fanatical Arabs were.

Hegel talks about Persians like he talks about no other Muslims. Bearing in mind his wholesale dismissal of Turks and ambiguous portrayal of Arabs, it is difficult not to be impressed by the way he weaves poets such as Rumi, Nisami and Firdusi in and out of analyses filled with a whole variety of references to European literature. On one page of the aesthetics lectures, for example, in a discussion on the relative symbolical value of the organic and non-organic in art, a line from Firdusi is quoted in the

same paragraph as Virgil, Calderon and Shakespeare's Richard II—for a poet whose faith had long since withdrawn from history, this was some concession.¹¹¹ Persians, as we saw in the last section, seem to be the only Muslims Hegel allowed to challenge the European hegemony of the present, the only Muslims whose contemporary literature he ever referred to and whose influence he conceded some potential usefulness in. Alongside the conveniently apolitical category of the aesthetic, some Sufi similarities (encountered in the translations of Rückert, Görres and Hammer) to transcendental/immanent syntheses in Hegel's own thought, and the considerable influence of Goethe, Hegel's perception of the Persians' ethnolinguistic proximity to Germans must have played some part, however small, in their idealization.

Within the crystalline structure of Hegel's thought, the light of Islam found itself mirrored and refracted through a number of constantly shifting facets. Sometimes these facets converged harmoniously to produce a single, focused direction—a Christian/philosophical response to the denial of Christ's divinity, for example, or an Enlightenment/Romantic consensus on the inherently poetic (and therefore sensually irrational) nature of the 'Mohammedan'; at other times, Hegel's many facets sent back what they encountered in oblique, errant directions, producing idiosyncrasies, ironies, even contradictions—Romantic narratives of expansion and conquest would dazzle and conflict with Enlightenment deplorations of fanaticism and bourgeois fears of volatility, the conviction of Muslim savagery and backwardness would diverge strikingly from a philologist/historian's indebtedness to the genealogy of cultures.

Given the range and variety of these oscillations, these conquests which are sometimes remarkable, sometimes monstrous, these voices which can praise the glorious struggle against the Moors one minute, and dwell on the Arab origins of chivalric poetry the next, the slightly Foucauldian question arises of how interconnected Hegel's various compartments really were—or indeed, whether there is any nexus at all called 'Hegel' around which such loosely delineated sub-identities might be arranged. One tentative answer, which might at least demarcate a space in which Hegel's many voices were able to speak, could be that of a textual memory; if we were to understand a thinker as, amongst other things, an intensely *lexical* phenomenon, an absorber, modifier and redistributor of the written, then we might think of Hegel's multiple identities as a collection of different readers, whose various textual memories come to the fore at different times. The "Europe" Hegel had in mind as reader of Tasso/Ariosto was a very different one from that conceived by the reader of ethnologists such as Blumenbach/Elphinstone/Adelung; the word 'Oriental' summoned different landscapes for the reader of Kant/Fichte/Schelling and than it did for the reader of Goethe/Hammer/Rückert. Conflicts, in this sense, might have occurred between different bibliographies and the landscapes and feelings each one brought with them. A thinker is never, of course, merely the sum of what s/he reads,

nor are philosophers ever simply steered mnemonically by their libraries. As a means of understanding the lexical memory (or amnesia) of a certain moment, however, a consideration of the multiple libraries Hegel carried around in his head might help us understand how he could write such different things about his *Morgenland* at different times.

7 Marx the Moor

“And without total abandonment of the law of the Koran [argues opposition MP Cobden], it was impossible to put the Christians of Turkey upon an equality with the Turks.” We may as well ask Mr Cobden whether, with the existing State Church and laws of England, it is possible to put her working-men upon an equality with the Cobdens and the Brights?

—Marx, *The Eastern Question*, p. 260

Marx’s gesture here—that of turning an overconfident and unreflective Orientalism back onto its European author—fundamentally colours his entire approach to the Muslim world. His question to the opposition MP, deliciously Islamicising the British legislature and Church of England, exemplifies the strategy of *tu quoque* Marx often used in dealing with the Western critique of Islam: how can the English hope to judge the Ottomans, when they themselves have their own version of an Anglican ‘ulema preaching an Anglican Koran? The difficulties in writing about Marx and Muslims spring from all of the ambiguities, possibilities and latent prejudices of such a gesture. On the one hand, Marx’s fierce and uncompromising anti-imperialism, his relentless indignation at the injustices inflicted by a whole triad of imperialisms (Tsarist, Mid Victorian, Napoleonic) upon Arabs, Indians, Turks and Chinese, sets him off from every other major nineteenth-century thinker as an extraordinarily independent moral voice. Accompanying this admirable critique of colonialism, as numerous commentators have pointed out again and again, is a teleology of ‘advanced’ and ‘backward’ often differing little in character from those of the imperialists themselves. This ambivalent relationship towards European modernity—employing the Orientalist tropes and teleology of the modern to attack its capitalist/imperialist manifestations—will provide an interesting parallel to Nietzsche’s own Orientalist defense of the Oriental.

The biography-defying richness of Marx’s life and the irreducibility of his enormous oeuvre also supply a set of tacit yet incommensurable factors colouring the attitude Marx cultivated towards the religion and followers of Islam: from Marx’s own nickname ‘the Moor’, the *Arabian Nights* stories he read to his children at bedtime, the comparisons to a Turk he received from several quarters (most notably from the MP Urquhart, who said he had an intelligence worthy of one), to the irony of his only visit ever to a Muslim country (Algeria) in the final months of his life.¹ The cumulative intimacy of such minutiae does force us to consider, once again, what it means to say a thinker thought *x* or *y* about a particular subject. In the case of Marx, who could call Turkey “a compact . . . mass of Mussulman

fanaticism” one year and praise its “great development of communal and provincial life” the very next,² this Heraclitean nature of a thinker’s thoughts will be particularly relevant.

What factors complicate our investigation of Marx’s attitude towards the Muslim world? Three seem to be of unavoidable significance: first of all, the unquestionable collaboration with Engels on many matters ‘Oriental’, even to the point of Engels occasionally sending articles on Turkey to Marx to be printed under his name. Of course, rather too much has been made out of the mythical joint identity of Marx and Engels (a myth Engels appears to have been quite willing to encourage³), although it does seem clear that Marx relied on Engels—at least initially—for a relayed, second-hand knowledge of Islam. We know from their correspondence that, at numerous points throughout the 1850s, Marx asked Engels for articles on the fortunes of the Ottoman army across the Danube or the English in Persia, articles which were published under Marx’s name.⁴ This does lead us to a situation unlike that of any of the other thinkers featured in this book—namely, that in writing about one thinker, we shall have to be careful we are not in effect dealing with two.

A second note of caution in examining the consistencies and inconsistencies of Marx’s relationship to the Muslim Orient lies in the unpredictable and often erratic nature of the political developments themselves. Alliances between powers could form quickly and change overnight with equal rapidity—as the world saw when British warships helped their Ottoman allies to put down a Greek rebellion at the beginning of the Crimean War. The relationship between Russia and Turkey offers another telling example: in 1833, the Tsar sent a squadron of troops to help the Turks defeat their Egyptian enemies—barely a decade later, the Egyptian would be helping the Turks attack the Russians. Without being aware of such diplomatic volatility, one runs the risk of over-attributing the various fluctuations in Marx’s journalistic responses to an exaggerated inconsistency, rather than (more accurately) the bewildering spontaneity of the *Zeitgeist* itself.

A final caveat lies in Marx’s own development as a thinker, particularly with regards his reading of non-European cultures. The Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, who could speak sweepingly of an “everywhere” from “India to Ireland”, where history was gradually drawing “even the most barbarian nations into civilization”,⁵ appears to have gradually acquired a more sophisticated knowledge of the non-Western world through the reading of authors such as Kovalevsky and, in the case of Islam, Bernier and Raffles. Numerous authors have already pointed out an increasingly refined view of Russia in Marx’s work from the 1850s onwards,⁶ and to some degree this can be extended to the Muslim world as well. The Crimean War was certainly a factor in this awakening of Marx’s interest in the Ottomans—in one 1853 letter, he tells Engels how the whole ‘Eastern question’ is “complete Greek to me [*ist mir Spanisch*]”, but promises at the end to

“have a look at a couple more books about Turkey, there’s a whole stack of them in the Athenaeum”.⁷ In the years that follow, the possibility of Ottoman Turkey either as a site for revolution or a catalyst towards revolution in other countries (particularly Russia) drove both Engels and Marx to read more about Islam and Islamic societies, part of a general interest in non-European ethnology which culminated in the so-called ‘ethnological notebooks’ of the late 1870s. Exactly how solid an ascendant this line of development took in Marx remains to be seen—what is important, for now, is to warn against any idea in his work of a static level of knowledge of the Muslim world.

MARX THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST: THE NOBLE SONS OF MOHAMMED

My husband is at the moment deeply in the Eastern Question and highly elated about the honourable, unwavering entrance of the sons of Mahomet against all the Christian humbug and atrocity-mongers.

—Jenny Marx to Friedrich Sorge, January 21, 1877⁸

Reminiscent of Herder in his fierce and often sarcastic critique of imperialism, Marx nevertheless shared little of Herder’s slavophilia—on the contrary, a fundamentally negative attitude towards Tsarist Russia and its Orthodox claims on Istanbul/Constantinople emerges as the dominant chord in Marx’s anti-imperialist voice.⁹ At a time when Russia was trying to use the widely perceived imminent collapse of the Ottoman domains as an excuse to invade them, we find Marx employing a variety of different registers to resist this—and to condemn the Russophilic elements of the British press and parliament (such as Cobden) who were on the Tsar’s side.

One such register was a strikingly moral note, a voice of indignation which invoked notions of friendship, loyalty, dignity and moral justice. When Russia attempts to negotiate secretly with England about a possible attack against her Ottoman allies, Marx translates this into distinctly moral terms—imagine if someone conspired with us on how to murder a common friend!¹⁰ In such moments, Turkey takes on a familiar Rousseauistic innocence—it has dignity, rectitude and all the righteousness victimhood can bring:

It is not to be denied that Turkey, the weaker state, has shown more true courage, as well as more wise statesmanship, than either of her powerful allies [Britain and France]. She has risen to the height of the occasion—they have cowered beneath it. She has rejected the demands of her hereditary foe [Russia], not with braggadocio, but with grave and worthy earnestness and dignity.¹¹

Of course, the risk of monodimensionality which all depiction of innocence runs coincided with Marx's own low estimation of Turkey's cultural level (in an article from the same year, Marx had bemoaned how "all the attempts at civilization by the Turkish authority . . . have failed".¹²) This led to some problems for Marx, whose moral position vis-a-vis imperialism also involved a condemnation of the hypocrisy of the 'civilizing mission', a condemnation which has at least to imply some degree of already extant 'civilization' in the country concerned. Leaving the endlessly repeated 'unconscious tool of history' quote to one side for a moment, it is difficult not to be impressed by the moral depth and breadth of Marx's anger—his awareness of how the English seized Herat with the pretense of defending the Afghans, or his rage at the brutal British treatment of Greeks in the Ionian islands—whipping women and children and then boasting of having given them a free constitution.¹³ However, in attempting to criticise the times for wanting "to subject the inhabitants of Turkey to the 'pure sway' and civilizing influence of Russia and Austria",¹⁴ Marx sometimes saw such *civilisateur* justifications as hypocritical (i.e. a valid reason, but not the real reason) and other times as inaccurate (his insistence on the progress Ottoman Turkey had already made, his sarcastic repetition of the idea that Turkey was "a country without a road", his occasional pleas not to dismiss Turkish history as a series of "palace revolutions"¹⁵).

To these subtly different motivating factors in Marx's anti-imperialism—defending the Turk at times on the grounds of his innocence, at times on the grounds of his relative development—we can add the purity of Marx's own Russophobia. Throughout his coverage of the Crimean War, Marx gives the general impression that Russia is no less culturally backward than Ottoman Turkey—Russia is "semi-Asiatic",¹⁶ we are told, a conviction which seems to have dogged Marx into his late years ("your Russian", Marx says of Bakunin in 1863, "once scratched, has again revealed himself to be a Tartar"¹⁷). In this sense, although Marx's defense of the Ottomans in his journalism is quite striking—he calls the Tsar in his negotiations with Turkey a bear, a hypocrite, a monster—the anti-imperialist voice he uses in these moments might be more accurately termed an anti-Tsarist one, as Marx saw the expansion of Russian nationalism as a feudalistic threat to the progress of the Revolution. Throughout the 1850s, at least, even though there is a sympathy for the Ottoman underdog in the European negotiations, Marx only seems to really criticise the Western imperialist powers when they appear to be favouring Russia. The teleological underpinnings of this calculated sympathy we shall come to in a moment.

Time and space do not permit a study of the further sub-registers which could be discerned within Marx's anti-imperialist defense of Turks, Afghans and Arabs. Apart from a resentment of Russia, a sense of injustice for the innocence of the exploited 'native', and an occasional frustration with the false European conviction of their savagery, a distaste towards Christianity as a state religion—and Empire's use of it as a

legitimater of rule—also comes to the fore. Whether it is in both Russia and Europe's claims to protect the rights of Turkey's Christian subjects (which Marx quite correctly saw as a right to interference), an insistence on there being—contrary to Western claims—"no polemical schism" between Muslims and Greeks in Ottoman Turkey, or even the Armenian prince, whose speech Marx reprints in his article, exhorting Armenians to support the Ottoman authorities against the Russian foe, Marx's conviction of Christianity as a mere tool of imperialism does colour his Ottoman sympathies when writing about its struggle for survival against a Christian West.¹⁸

If anything complicated Marx's defense of the Ottoman underdog against the "bear" of Russia and the moralizing hypocrites of Paris and London, it was the fact that the Ottomans were themselves an empire. Marx neither circumvented nor ever really confronted this question: his comparison of Turkish and Roman conquering styles (both, for Marx, were content to allow the pre-existing order to survive and merely pay tribute), his early anger at Turkish reprisals in Bucharest and the extraordinary alliance the Russians made with "their tools" the Turks to put down Romanian independence, not to mention his highly critical portrait of Ottoman Jerusalem, where "fanatic and greedy pashas" played the Christian populations against one another . . . all testify to an awareness of the limitations of any easy depiction of Ottoman 'victimhood'.¹⁹ Not that Marx passed up a chance to compare Ottoman imperialism favourably with its British and Russian counterparts—in reporting the brutalities of British rule in the Ionian islands, Marx follows Hegel in the view that the Greeks do not even have the privileges under the British that they had under the Turks.²⁰ Both Marx and Engels's decision to sympathise with Turkey against Russia in their extensive coverage of the Crimean War was, in the end, a *realpolitikal* one—like all hermeneutical strategies born of Realpolitik, it emphasized some aspects and overlooked others. The surprising frequency of the noble Turk in Marx's passionate anti-imperialism—innocent, dignified, not really as barbaric as claimed, but occasionally greedy and oppressive—was largely a consequence of this approach.

MARX THE TELEOLOGIST: THE TURKS MUST BE GOT RID OF

As for the swindle of religion, it seems . . . that Muhammed's religious revolution, like every religious movement, was in terms of form a reaction, an apparent return to the old and the simple.

—Engels to Marx, June 3, 1853²¹

If Marx spoke about Muslims as noble victims in his anti-imperialist voice, and even sought to combat Western charges of primitivism in his own

critique of the ‘civilizing mission’, Marx’s teleology took a much less positive view of the Muslim world (and Ottoman Turkey in particular), seeing both the *chronos* and *topos* of Islam not so much as something to be defended, but rather as something to be overcome.

This view certainly underwent a great deal of restructuring and refinement throughout Marx’s life. The early Marx was happy to use Turkey as a constant pool of negative references for his own critique of Europe: “Rhineland justice is as imperfect as the Turkish!” he cries in 1842, and in the same year writes how Prussian patriotism is advocated in the same way “the hangman’s rope enhances Turkish nationalism”.²² Marx’s conviction of the utter backwardness of Ottoman Turkey was so great that he considered it to be a rotting carcass, one whose feudal processes of putrefaction were as inevitable as they were irreversible.²³

In touching this point, we are moving onto the familiar ground of Marx’s alleged collusion with imperialist projects as a means of bringing non-Western feudalisms in Asia and the Middle East onto the road of capitalism and, of course, ultimately communism. Numerous critics have rebuffed these charges in various ways. Some have pointed out how this view of colonialism as an auxiliary to revolution was merely a phase. Engels, having applauded the French conquest of Algeria in 1848, was expressing definite sympathy for Arab resistance to French rule after 1857 (similarly, Anderson points out how Marx makes fewer references to colonialism and progress after the same date).²⁴ Aijaz Ahmad insists Marx never portrayed resistance to colonialism as misdirected, was far more radical in his position on Indian independence than any nineteenth-century Indian reformer, and points out that Marx was just as sweeping in his descriptions of the backwardness of European peasants (“mired in the idiocy of rural life”) as he was about Indian or Arab ones.²⁵

Whilst a great deal of this argumentation is valid—Marx’s attitude towards the non-European does become more sophisticated after the 1850s—it rests on the questionable assumption that opposing beliefs in a thinker replace one another consecutively and coherently, instead of tacitly vying and engaging with one another in an unconscious struggle for the primacy of expression. The letters written from Marx’s late visit to Algiers (in 1882—Marx was sixty-four), seem to suggest the outlines of one such unresolved struggle—in one correspondence, we find Marx complaining of the French treatment of Arab Algerians:

a single, isolated judge’s life is occasionally threatened by colonists, if he does not allow . . . a dozen innocent Arabs to be jailed as suspects of murder . . . we know that were a European colonist settles among the “lower races”, he considers himself in general more invulnerable than the handsome Wilhelm I. But the Britons and Dutch surpass the French in shameless arrogance, pretentiousness, and cruel Moloch-propitiation-rage against the “lower races”.²⁶

Marx's indignation is very much the anger we have just been examining—a sympathy for the Muslim victim of European colonialism and racial arrogance. Five days later, however, in a letter to Laura Laforgue, quite a different picture of the Arab emerges, as Marx describes his visit to a cafe in Algiers:

On a rough table . . . , their legs crossed, half a dozen Moorish visitors . . . were together playing at cards (a conquest this on them of civilisation). Most striking this spectacle: some of these Moors were dressed pretentiously, even richly, others in, for once I dare call it blouses, sometime of woollen appearance, sometimes in rags and tatters—but in the eyes of a true Mussulman such accidents . . . do not distinguish Mahomet's children.

. . .

Our nomadic Arabs (in many respects very degenerated, but who have retained some solid qualities through their struggle for existence) remember that they had once produced great philosophers, scholars, etc, and that the Europeans scorn them because of their present ignorance.²⁷

To be fair to Marx, his evident conviction of the Arab's cultural inferiority finds no explicit racial expression, even if a term such as "our nomadic Arabs" seems to be generically ethnic. The difference in tone between the two passages, however, is striking, and borders on the schizophrenic: the first voice expresses perfect moral empathy with the Arabs, directing its outrage at the false racial hauteur of the European colonialist and the swagger of their claims to superiority. The second voice, by contrast, appears to belong to precisely this group—the wry, self-certain irony of the bourgeois European traveller, observing the eccentric customs and silly costumes of the childish natives. Marx's guided tour, the following week, of a squadron of French warships that were docked in the harbour would seem to underline the ambiguities of his sympathy with the colonial Arab.

The scholar Said, in his treatment of Marx, explains the contradiction in tone between his sympathy for Indians and his positive interpretation of British rule in India somewhat humanistically—a rush of "fellow feeling" for the victim of imperialism is blocked by the dehumanizing type of the Oriental Marx had received from writers such as Goethe.²⁸ What Marx's sympathy for the human demanded, his knowledge of the 'Oriental' denied. It might be more useful, however, to call what took place in Marx's Algerian letters not merely a relegation of human compassion to the terminology of the Orientalist, but more specifically a clash of registers—Marx the critic of imperialism wanting to disparage Empire, but encountering resistance from the teleologist whose very understanding of progress was assisted by the imperialism under attack. The two voices brought with them different vocabularies—if the former saw Muslims as "innocent" and victims of "arrogance", the latter saw them as "degenerate", childlike and

in evident need of civilization. If the voice of Marx's anti-imperialism was an early nineteenth-century Romantic one, privileging individual freedom and protection from tyranny, Marx's teleological voice brought with it a cooler, more technical awareness of collectivities, of how the revolution would come, and what cultural and economic conditions were necessary for it to take place. The inhumanism implicit in such an approach facilitated, indeed made necessary, the kind of dehumanized 'Oriental' Said correctly discerned.

With regards to Turkey, a similar tension emerges in Marx's own opinion of the significance of the Ottoman Empire. In the 1850s, Marx had praised the "true courage" and "wise statesmanship" of Turkey,²⁹ acknowledged the "great development" of its urban and rural infrastructures, been fiercely critical of the "ever-meddling Ambassadors" of Britain and France and had constantly denounced the anti-Turkishness of newspapers such as *The Times* and Russophiles such as Cobden.³⁰ Nevertheless, despite Marx's contempt for Empire, we still find in an 1853 letter to Engels (listed as the last of four important points):

4) The necessary dissolution [*nothwendige Aufloesung*] of the Musulman empire. In one way or another it will slip into the hands of European civilisation.³¹

Around the same time, in an article for the *New York Tribune*, we see an expanded consideration of this perception of the Ottoman empire as a transitional phase:

who are the traders in Turkey? Certainly not the Turks. Their way of promoting trade, when they were yet in their original nomadic state, consisted in robbing caravans . . . The Greeks and Armenians . . . carry on the whole of the trade . . . Remove the Turks out of Europe, and trade will have no reason to suffer. And as to progress in general civilization, who are they that carry out that progress in all parts of European Turkey? Not the Turks, for they are few and far between . . . It is the Greek and Slavonic middle class . . . who are the real support of whatever civilization is effectively imported into the country. That part of the population is constantly rising in wealth and influence, and the Turks are more and more driven into the background. Were it not for their monopoly of civil and military power they would soon disappear . . . The fact is, they must be got rid of.³²

No longer an object of tyranny but an obstacle to progress, the Turk must disappear. In this transition from hero to hindrance, from scapegoat to stumbling block, Marx moves back and away from the empirical particularities of his critique of Empire (his objection against the Russian murder of Turkish prisoners of war, his moral indignation of the British/French

betrayal of their Ottoman allies) to the ‘bigger picture’ of the wider aims of the Revolution, whom Marx called “our old friend . . . the old mole that can work in the earth so fast”.³³ This move—from *topos* to *telos*, from the sympathy with a particular situation to a wider, more detached appraisal necessary for an overreaching goal—has a number of consequences for Marx’s Turk. In terms of temporality, the Turk is pushed into the past, ‘barbarianized’. The ludicrous association of contemporary Ottomans in 1850 with caravan-robbing nomads from the twelfth century (which runs contrary to Marx’s own frequent complaint that most Western notions of Turkey “were based on the Arabian Nights”³⁴) underlines how, in order to move forward, the Turk has to be returned to history. A second consequence is the peripheralizing of the Turk, a gesture which goes hand in hand with his dehumanization. “The Sultan holds Constantinople only in trust for the Revolution”, Marx wrote the same year³⁵—working in a purely ancillary manner, the Turk (and his ultimate disappearance) contribute indirectly to the secular eschatology of Marx’s analysis. Like the converted Sultan in the seventeenth-century millenarianism of the Turco-Calvinists, they will bring the Day of the Revolution forward. They are not the owners or the inhabitants of the lands they have but the stewards. With this peripheralization comes the loss of their *Menschheit* and the subsequent effacement of their right to moral sympathy, the sympathy Marx as critic of Empire had been more than willing to extend.

MARX THE RESEARCHER: ISLAM AS FOIL, CLUE AND CATALYST

There is perhaps no country, except Turkey, so little known and so falsely judged by Europe as Spain.

—Marx, *New York Daily Tribune*, July 11, 1854³⁶

When we speak of Marx the researcher, it is primarily the Marx who devoted himself to a factual reading of the Orient, and who consequently saw the Muslim world as an enormous collection of data, history and geographical information to be imbibed, absorbed and strategically displayed. The primary spurs to this desire for knowledge of the Muslim world appear to have been military conflict—the Crimean War, in particular, prompting Marx to go into his library and read “a couple more books about Turkey”, as well as the final Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878.³⁷

When Marx approached the Muslim world as an object of research, two motivations seem to underlie the intensity of his archival efforts: the desire to supply a more informed corrective to false Western perceptions of Muslims (and thereby undermine in a more general way the epistemological credibility of various institutional mouthpieces—British newspapers/German academics/Tsarist diplomats), and secondly, a more anthropological

interest in the economic and social structures both of Islam, and of Muslim countries such as Algeria.

Initially, Marx seems to have relied upon Engels for detailed background about Islam. Although an early awareness of Western defamations and reductionism concerning the Muslim world is evident (we read in *The German Ideology* how “no-one will deny that amongst those who believe in Islam, no-one believes in exactly the same way”³⁸), it was Engels who, in the summer of 1853, seems to have fed Marx with a number of key points concerning Islam. Engels’s approach towards the subjects of his topic reveals a surprisingly cavalier and condescending attitude—in a letter to Marx he writes:

Since I’ve been sitting in Oriental grease for a couple of weeks now, I’ve decided to use the opportunity to learn Persian. My in-bred hatred of all Semitic languages has scared me off Arabic, as well as the impossibility of ever learning (without losing too much time) such a long-established language, which has 4,000 roots and stretches back over 2–3,000 years. In contrast Persian as a language is child’s play. If it wasn’t for this bloody Arabic alphabet [*verfluchten arabischen Alphabets*] where six letters all look the same, and where the vowels aren’t visible, I’d manage the whole grammar in 48 hours.³⁹

Because of the increasingly relevant geopolitical status of Ottoman Turkey due to the “Eastern Question”, Engels’s attitude towards the necessary ‘homework’ he has to do in order to accurately evaluate current events east of Rome is that of a reluctant learner. Given the inwardness and naivete of capitalist/imperialist pronouncements on Turkey, however, such knowledge proved to be essential as part of Marx and Engels’s much larger strategy of demonstrating the hollowness of both Russian “pan-slavic propaganda” as well as Western diplomacy’s “paltry” information networks, based more on the “interested [biased] accounts of Greek interpreters and Frank merchants” than any real knowledge of Muslim history and culture.⁴⁰ Unsurprisingly, Marx’s criticisms of the exaggerated and exoticising tone of, for example, anti-Turkish attitudes in *The Morning Chronicle*—which Marx insisted was “exciting its dull readers by romantic descriptions of the fierce and undisciplined Asiatic hordes inundating European Turkey”⁴¹—was sometimes replicated to the letter by Marx himself. Six weeks after criticising the “Asiatic hordes” romanticized by newspapers like the *Chronicle*, Marx was reporting how “swarms of bedouins, Kurds and other warlike irregulars” were joining the Ottoman Transcaucasian army.⁴² Marx’s wide-ranging and intelligent denunciations of the mid-nineteenth-century print media, apart from offering some of the most striking examples of his humour, forms almost a *Leitmotif* in itself, a careful distancing from the unreflective ‘patriotism’ and imperialist xenophobia of his day. A superior knowledge of Muslim culture and history—not to mention Christianity’s

interaction with it—was an essential part of Marx's strategy in this respect, which is why we find him so often dwelling on myth-deflating details and complexities which run contrary to the us-versus-them paradigms in circulation.

Marx's eye for detail, for all its spirit of one-upmanship, is impressive. He delights in the scholarly *lacunae* of his opponents—whether it is the Turcophile Urquhart's not having read Moltke's *Turkish War* or the propagandist Vogt's ignorance of who the Ottoman Fanariots really were.⁴³ In their Crimean War journalism, Marx and Engels seemed particularly keen to stress the relatively tolerant, multifaceted nature of Ottoman society (clearly with Russian complaints of tyranny and oppression in mind). In such moments, quoting Armenian princes who speak in support of the Turks against the Tsar or citing the Byzantine's infamously stated preference for the Sultan's turban over the Cardinal's hat,⁴⁴ Marx's devotion to the problematic particular was clearly intended to dissolve the Manichean universes of Tsarist/imperialist rallying calls and remind people of what for Marx *really* moved history—not so much civilizational identities but the self-interest of specific groups. Marx's identity as a researcher—his famed devouring of archives and library catalogues—to some extent found some harmony with this pro-Ottoman platform.

Before moving on, we should also mention another aspect of the Muslim world which Marx, in his capacities as a researcher, found of relevance: namely, its relationship to futurity both as a precedent for social collectivism and as a geo-political catalyst for revolutionary change. As early as 1844, Marx had defined communism as “the positive expression of the overcoming of private property”.⁴⁵ There is a sense in which Marx's gradually increasing familiarity with non-Western cultures—culminating in the ethnographical notebooks from the very last years of his life—gave him (in contrast to the Hegelian conviction of his teleologies) a fresh perspective on the propertylessness of the ‘Oriental’: “In the East, under the village system, the people practically governed themselves”.⁴⁶ The idea of a social system somehow anthropologically prone to collectivism must have teased Marx, for he associated the idea with Islam again and again. In a letter to Engels, for example, he recommended the Orientalist Bernier's work on the Moghuls:

Bernier finds quite rightly the basic form of the entire appearance of the Orient—he speaks of Turkey, Persia, Hindustan—lies in the fact that *no private property* exists. This is the real key to the Oriental heaven.⁴⁷

Marx certainly never appears to have idealized Islam as a political model, unlike the other thinkers in this book: Nietzsche's preferable vision of a manly, life-loving religion, Herder's proto-nationalism, the early Schlegel's model for a new modernity (not to mention a modern thinker such as Foucault's celebration of Shi'ia Islam as a “political spirituality”).⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the remarks infuse Marx's Islam with an air of opportunity and possibility—even if it is ultimately a *missed* opportunity. In one of his last letters from Algeria, Marx observed “the absolute equality in their social intercourse” in remarking upon his fellow Arab customers in the cafe, even if their cultural conviction of social equality was of little use: “Still they go to the devil without a revolutionary movement”.⁴⁹ Marx makes a similar point in an 1878 letter to the activist Liebknecht. First of all, he describes the reasons why both he and Engels have taken the side of the Turks in the Russo-Turkish war:

We strongly take the Turks' side for two reasons:

1. because we have studied the Turkish peasantry—that is, the Turkish people—and have got to know them as absolutely one of the toughest and most upright examples of peasantry in Europe.
2. because the defeat of the Russians . . . would have accelerated social change in Russia and thereby the rhythm of the whole of Europe.⁵⁰

Two points emerge here. Marx's letter, in many respects, continues the tone of his Crimean War journalism twenty years earlier; he goes on to blame the Western European powers for not supporting the Ottomans in their war with Russia—and yet the blame for the missed opportunity lies not merely with Austria and England, but also with the Turks, who “missed [*versäumt*] the chance of starting a revolution in Constantinople” (ibid.). Turkey, like Algeria, is politically hopeless: “A *Volk* who, in the most dramatic moment of crisis don't know how to start a revolution, are lost” (ibid.). In this sense, Marx's eschatological understanding of the catalytic part the Turks were to play in the oncoming revolution would be closer to the thirteenth-century Franciscan (and Schlegel) than the seventeenth-century Calvinist—that is, the Turks would be enabling, even crucial, but not converted.

Secondly, the moments where Marx speaks primarily as a researcher seem to dissolve, rather than reinforce, the idea of a clearly demarcated ‘modern’ or ‘Christian’ Europe, in contrast to his teleological or anti-imperialist positions (the Muslim world as a slow horse or innocent victim). The attention Marx gives to Christians who worked for the Ottomans (such as the Fanariots or the Polish officer Jozef Bem), his conviction of the Byzantine nature of the contemporary Ottoman, not to mention the wholly inclusive way he speaks about the Turkish peasants as ‘the best’ in Europe⁵¹ . . . all seem to subtly mix notions of a Christian Europe and a Muslim world, and push Marx's *Kritik* in a different direction from his other voices. If the Marx obsessed with development saw the caravan-robbing Turks as obstacles to those real sources of civilization and progress in Ottoman Turkey, the Greeks, Marx the researcher saw no difference between the two,

the Ottoman Turk simply being a fusion of Turkish tradition and “Byzantine theocracy”, both of which had to go (*müssen caput gehn*).⁵² Without exaggerating the frequency of these moments, we could say Marx’s more archival awareness of detail and genealogy did bring a tension into the absolutizing passions of his anti-imperialism and devotion to progress, tensions which sometimes led to contradictions.

THE LITERARY MARX: DEALING IN IMAGES

If Marx saw the Muslim world, on different occasions, as a noble victim of imperialism, a backward realm of savagery, a catalyst of revolutionary change, an archive of anthropological data as well as a foil for imperialist hypocrisy and European self-congratulation, the Islamic Orient also supplied Marx with a final function: that of a reservoir of images and literary tropes, which he used to various ends in different rhetorical strategies. When we speak of Marx the image-dealer, a certain reader comes to the fore—the devotee of the translations of Rückert, Hammer and the *Thousand and One Nights*. The ‘Orient’ Marx was able to summon imagistically to ridicule a certain politician or eternalize the wisdom of a particular point was most certainly a rhetorical Orient, a pragmatist’s Orient, a textual *Morgenland* whose artificial status Marx was sometimes well aware of but which (as we have already seen) he also allowed to spill into what he thought and wrote about real Turks, Arabs and Kurds; barely three weeks into his stay in North Africa, Marx is still able to write of the “magical . . . city of Algiers” whose “mood” is straight out of “the *Thousand and One Nights*”.⁵³ Images from the world of Sinbad and Shahrazad helped Marx to inject a note of falsity, caprice and superficiality into his intended subjects: the newly elected Prime Minister Palmerston was compared to “that cursed old man of the sea whom Sinbad the Sailor found it impossible to shake off once he had allowed him to mount on his shoulders”⁵⁴; the various Rajas and Nawabs that the British in India tried to prop up as part of their imperial project were seen as “absurd, ridiculous and childish . . . [as] those Shahzamans and Sharirars of the *Arabian Nights*”.⁵⁵ Unsurprisingly, for a thinker who saw criticism of religion as the premise of all criticism,⁵⁶ Mohammed and the Koran also emerge as metaphors for impostorship and domineering ambition: the global flight of the political activist Bakunin (whom Marx grew to dislike) is cynically described as the “wonderful Hegira of a new Mohammed”, whilst Daumer’s *Religion des neuen Weltalters* (which Marx detested) is reviewed as “a new Koran” whose “suras” are nothing more than a collection of flowery and over-embroidered phrases.⁵⁷ In a sense, this “Mohammedanizing” of one’s chosen target takes us back to Luther’s Münzer, Kant’s Anabaptists, Herder’s Kant, Hegel’s Robespierre and forward in a different way to Nietzsche’s Plato—the calculated decision to evoke a particular series of infamous associations in the exoticising of a certain target.

To perform such a gesture—to call an enemy “Mohammed”, to call the book one rejects a Koran—is not merely to designate an illegitimate claim to power or authority, but to tacitly collude in the Christian/European mechanisms by which such ‘legitimacy’ is decided. This was clearly more of a problem for Marx than it was for Luther or Herder; the irony is augmented by the fact that Marx, in certain moments, seems to have felt some empathy with a figure and a religion collectively condemned by the very Christian, capitalist Europe he himself had such difficulties with. As one of the central aims of the International Alliance was, in Marx’s words, the “annihilation of all religious, monarchic, aristocratic and bourgeois powers and forces in Europe”,⁵⁸ it is hardly surprising that some degree of unconscious empathy would be extended to the Other of those European powers and forces. From his famous nickname (“Moor” or “Old Moor”) to the self-stylized portrait with the “prophet’s beard” he had taken by a photographer before going to a barber’s shop in Algiers,⁵⁹ Marx occasionally allowed something akin to an outsider’s sympathy for the outside to emerge in the development of his own political struggle. A curious instance of this appears in an early newspaper article on the freedom of the press (1843):

We have to tell our neighbour [the *Kölnische Zeitung*] an anecdote. In Rome, the publication of the Koran is prohibited. A wily Italian knew how to get around it. He published a *Refutation* of the Koran, but the content was simply the text of the Koran. And did not all heretics know how to play this trick? . . . Did not Voltaire himself, in his *Bible enfin expliquée*, teach religious unbelief in the text and belief in the notes, and did anybody trust the purifying efficacy of these notes?⁶⁰

In one sense, the meaning is clear and unproblematic. Marx’s struggles as a German newspaper editor with the Prussian censors have attained the status of myth—the passage is merely evoking Montecroce’s *Rifutazione Alcorano* as a clever trick for getting round the censors. Marx’s tip, however, places his own political ‘message’ in the same critical compartment as the Koran. Even if a common antipathy to the Vatican is not enough to have the analogy developed, an implicit pairing of Marx’s anti-capitalism with the Koran’s anti-Catholicism does make subversive cousins of them both. The familiar question here is: if identity really is shifting and malleable, how far does common opposition to a particular structure or belief system produce affinities—or even the inclination to find affinities—in otherwise separate vocabularies? A kind of triangular logic takes place at this point: when an Anglican calls the ‘ulema unjust, Marx may decide the Anglican is correct, but blind to the very same deficiencies in himself—a gesture which makes no rapprochement whatsoever to either religion; or, seeing the Church of England as fundamentally reactionary in its divine celebration of social inequity, Marx might critically reconsider what kind of ‘injustice’ the ‘ulema are supposed to practice, to see if it has any relation to his

own notion of what is ‘just’. Among the oscillations between these two decisions Marx’s many voices performed throughout his life, the tendency seems to have been towards the first, although the possibility of a more radical empathy with the much-dreaded and much-defamed figure of the “cruel and barbarous Turk” (to use Marx’s wholly ironic phrasing⁶¹) was always there, even if it remained largely unactualized.

One final aspect of the literary Marx concerns the use he made of ‘Oriental’ wisdom and anecdotes in order to justify his own positions. There was certainly nothing exclusively ‘Islamic’ about this; the enormous dimensions of Marx’s erudition, and the way he could skillfully draw on examples from Shakespeare or classical myth to strengthen or render ironic an argument, are commonplace enough observations in Marxian criticism. Whether it is the story of the two Persian naturalists and the bear who is capable of anything (which Marx uses to reinforce his own warnings concerning Tsarist expansionism) or the Arab tale of the ferryman and the drowning philosopher from Marx’s Algerian letters,⁶² Marx’s occasional nuggets of Oriental wisdom performed this function of exotically underlining the already said. An additional effect of these ‘Oriental’ citations was to supply a broader temporality for his own views by suggesting eleventh-century Arab and sixteenth-century Persian precedents for them. An early use of the medieval poet al-Hariri (whom Marx had read in Rückert’s translation) supplies an interesting example. In yet another article on the freedom of the press (1842), Marx mocks the conservative fear that press freedom can change material conditions—as naive, Marx insists, as believing a telescope is responsible for the “unceasing motion of the universe”.⁶³ Scorning the conservative belief in both cosmic as well as social stasis, Marx quotes al-Hariri, a poet who “was no Frenchman by birth, but an Arab”:

He who never destroys what he has built, ever stands
On this terrestrial world, which itself never stands still. (Ibid.)

Just as the early Schlegel was able to glimpse the anticipation of modernity in the world-fashioning gesture of Mohammed, Marx locates a very modern belief in the dynamism of matter (and implicitly of history) in the writings of an eleventh-century Muslim poet. Just as Nietzsche will be able to ascertain a medieval precedent for his nihilism in a band of Islamic warrior-monks (the Assassins), Marx’s citation of al-Hariri runs against the temporality of ‘advanced’ and ‘backward’ not in any Rousseauistic fashion (a return to innocence, a frustration with the present, etc.) but rather in the acknowledgment of a moment of non-European clarity from the premodern. The fact that Marx was able to transform, however anachronistically, such moments of medieval Orientalia into ammunition for his present-day attacks on conservative naivete and bourgeois Russophilia, does suggest that in certain moments at least, even an “Arab by birth” could become a “Frenchman”. If Marx the researcher saw the Muslim world as an entity

which could only teach Europe as a passive object of study, through what it was (and if Marx the teleologist saw little to be learnt from it at all), the literary Marx approached Arabs and Persians on a much more equal footing, as a still-relevant store of wisdom, tricks and tropes.⁶⁴

All in all, how does Marx's treatment of Islam stand in relation to his predecessors? Certain precedents are not hard to find: the Herderesque fervour in his critique of Empire, the Leibnizian sifting through data for a certain model, the familiar moments of the Muslim world's Hegelian irrelevance, combined with an equally familiar apocalyptic tone—Marx trying to calculate the Day of the Revolution from the military fortunes of the Turks, just as Schlegel drew on the same kind of data to predict a slightly different Day. If the tensions between Leibniz's, Hegel's and Schlegel's various identities seemed to spring from a disparity between ideological perception and philological knowledge, Marx's numerous discordances arose primarily from a moral indebtedness to the identity of the colonized Muslim on the one hand, and a political need for his evaporation on the other.

That Marx would never effectively balance the two—as the Arabs in Marx's Algerian letters show, colonized victim one minute, nomadic buffoon the next—stems in part from a conflicted attitude towards the whole idea of cultural difference; "The working men have no country", Marx famously declares in the *Manifesto*, and goes on to report with delight that "[n]ational differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing".⁶⁵ On the one hand, Marx the researcher would dedicate his reading-room energies to a greater knowledge of the non-Western world partly to better understand such cultures as an important point of reference in his own investigations, and partly to combat European imperialist propaganda and delusions about these regions. On the other hand, Marx was reluctant to essentialize and solidify the cultural differences he was delineating, lest he himself participate in the solidarity-dissolving game of nation-states and racial identity which monarchs and emperors played in order to keep the proletariat divided and against one another. In our next and final chapter, moving from one European outsider to another, we shall consider how closely Marx's dilemma—how to write about the enemy of one's enemy—resembled Nietzsche's own collections of sympathies, prejudices, fantasies and spontaneous solidarities with non-Europe.

8 Nietzsche's Peace with Islam

Still one final question: if we had believed from our youth onwards that all salvation issued from someone other than Jesus, from Mahomet for instance, is it not certain that we should have experienced the same blessings?

—Letter to Elisabeth Nietzsche, June 11, 1865¹

Nietzsche is twenty-one years old when, in this letter to a sister more convinced of the Lutheran faith than himself, he defends his reasons for abandoning the study of theology at Bonn. The letter, like most of Nietzsche's work, has nothing to do directly with Islam. And yet, in groping for an alternative metaphor to express what he felt to be the *provinciality* of Christianity, Nietzsche reaches for the name Mahomet. It is a gesture which cannot but have provoked the nineteen-year-old Elisabeth: the suggestion that their lives would not have been radically different had they been *Mohammedaner* must have had, at the very least, some intended shock value. This use of Islam as a tool for provincializing and re-evaluating the "European disease" of Judaeo-Christian modernity was to be repeated in Nietzsche's works with surprising frequency.

To those unfamiliar with Nietzsche's work, the words "Nietzsche" and "Islam" appear initially incongruous. Despite well over a hundred references to Islam and Islamic cultures (Hafiz, Arabs, Turks) in the *Gesamtausgabe*, not a single monograph exists on the subject²; in comparison with the wealth of attention devoted to studies of Nietzsche and the 'high Orient' (Buddha, Hinduism, Japanese and Chinese philosophy), not a single article on Nietzsche and Islam can be found in any volume *Nietzsche Studien* up to the present day. The 'low Orient', to use Said's term, does not appear to have stimulated any significant critical interest.

This is a strange state of affairs, when one considers how important Islam was to Nietzsche as an example of "an affirmative Semitic religion".³ Islam forever hovers in the background of Nietzsche's writing, both published and unpublished; whether it's a remark about the Assassins or a reference to the Prophet's alleged epilepsy, a desire to live in North Africa or a pairing of Goethe with Hafiz, the praise or Moorish Spain or a section on "Turkish fatalism", Nietzsche's interest in Christianity's combative Other appears to increase as the years pass by. "The Antichrist", Nietzsche's last finished work, devotes more attention to the enemies of the Crusades than any of his other books.

Nietzsche's fervent reading of Orientalist texts seems to underline this interest in Islam: Palgrave's "Reise in Arabien" in German translation (1867–1868), Wellhausen's *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (1884)⁴, Max Müller's

Islam in Morgen- und Abendland, Benfrey's *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft und orientalischen Philologie* (1869)⁵ . . . even when we encounter books in his notes which have no immediate relevance to anything Muslim—such as Schack's book on Spanish theatre—we find an interrogative “über den Islam?” scribbled after it.

Nietzsche's interest in Islam and Islamic cultures and his striking consumption of Orientalist scholarship was certainly driven by a resolve to employ such cultures as a barometer of difference—a ready at hand store of alternative customs and values to undermine the universalist claims of both European Christianity and modernity. This yearning to acquire what Nietzsche called (in somewhat Emersonian tones) a “trans-European eye”⁶—one which, presumably, would save him from the “senile shortsightedness” (*greisenhaften Kurzsichtigkeit*) of most Europeans—finds its most convincing expression in a letter written to a friend, Köselitz, in 1881:

Ask my old comrade Gersdorff whether he'd like to go with me to Tunisia for one or two years . . . I want to live for a while amongst Muslims, in the places moreover where their faith is at its most devout; this way my eye and judgement for all things European will be sharpened. (own translation)⁷

There is, it should be said, nothing exclusively Islamophilic about this desire to leave Europe behind and live in a radically different culture—four years later, Nietzsche is saying the same thing about Japan in a letter to his sister.⁸ What is interesting, however, is not just the considerable length of Nietzsche's proposed stay, but also the resolve to experience the most conservative environment Islam has to offer. There is a typically Nietzschean fascination with extremities here which the Islam of North Africa, Nietzsche feels, is able to provide—a desire to push one's homegrown European sensibilities to the limit, so that their overall rupture in an alien context might enable a radically new kind of knowledge. Not so much a better understanding of Islam, then, but Islam as a means to better understanding oneself. Nietzsche's attitude to Islam—indeed, to most of what he calls the “Orient” or “Morgenland”—almost always retains this ulterior, epistemological function.

Another reason for Nietzsche's inordinate and generally sympathetic interest in Islam may well spring from Nietzsche's own somewhat notorious discomfort with German culture, a form of ethnic and cultural *Selbsthass* which in the closing pages of the *Antichrist* becomes a definite rant (“They are my enemies, I confess it, these Germans: I despise in them every kind of uncleanness of concept and value.”⁹). This would certainly not be the first time in the history of German letters that an intense critique of one's immediate cultural environment and background moved a writer to exaggerated sympathies with a more distant culture. Heine comes to mind as the most obvious example of how such cultural claustrophobia can metamorphose into a longing for the Orient:

I find all things German to be repulsive . . . everything German feels to me like sawdust.¹⁰

Actually, I'm no German, as you well know . . . I wouldn't really be proud, even if I were a German. Oh they are barbarians! There are only three civilised peoples: the French, the Chinese and the Persians. I am proud to be a Persian.¹¹

Of course, Heine's Judaism is of critical significance here and facilitates the repugnance he felt, at least in these epistolary moments, to all things German. Despite Nietzsche's claims of Polish lineage, his sense of being an outsider to German culture had to take another form—whereas Heine calls the Germans “des barbares” and deems Persians to be a “zivilisierte[s] Volk”, Nietzsche's favourable disposition towards Islam stems from the fact that it is less ‘modern’, emancipated and democratic, and not more so. It is interesting, nevertheless, that Nietzsche's two favourite German poets both happened to be writers who dedicated significant sections of their oeuvres to the Islamic Orient.¹²

The fact that Islam traditionally occupied the peculiar place of historical opposition to both European Christianity *and* modernity means that Nietzsche's positive remarks concerning Islam usually fall into four related categories: Islam's ‘unenlightened’ condition vis-à-vis women and social equality, its perceived ‘manliness’, its non-judgementalism and its affirmative character—one which says “Yes to life even in the rare and exquisite moments of Moorish life!”¹³ In all these remarks, a certain comparative tone is forever present, as if Islam was a kind of mirror in which the decadent, short-sighted European might finally glimpse the true condition of his decay.

In Nietzsche's various tirades against “the Christians of ‘civilized’ Christianity” and the so-called ‘progress’ of Europe “over and against Asia”,¹⁴ Nietzsche's sarcasm often enlists non-European or pre-European instances of a ‘purer’, pre-Enlightenment attitude to society. Muslims and Arabs, not surprisingly, often find themselves cited favourably alongside other ethnic groups and religions for not having succumbed to pitying and improving the lot of the masses (*das Gesindel*):

Earlier philosophers (among them Indians as well as Greeks, Persians and Muslims, in short people who believed in hierarchy and *not* in equality and equal rights.¹⁵

At the base of all these noble races is the predator . . . Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian vikings . . . on this essential point they are all the same. (own translation)¹⁶

It is interesting to see what kind of part Islam and Islamic cultures play in Nietzsche's history of *ressentiment*—where the weaker, life-denying, non-

Aryan values of chastity, meekness, equality, etc. were successfully substituted by the “rabble” in place of the stronger aristocratic (*vornehmen*) values of aggression, sexuality and hierarchy. Islamic societies, lumped together bizarrely with samurai, Norsemen, centurions and Brahman, represent a purer and, one feels, a more *honest* understanding of what human beings are. This idea of ‘honesty’ as being a distinguishing feature between Islam and the “mendacity” of Christianity will be repeated in Nietzsche again and again.¹⁷

This inclusion of Islam in the Nietzschean catalogue of more ‘honest’, pre-, non- or even anti-European societies offers two further points of interest: firstly, that Nietzsche’s remarks do not greatly differ from the kinds of observations a whole century of European Orientalists were making about Arabs and Muslims in general—that Islam is incapable of democracy, that it is fanatical and warlike, that it is *Frauenfeindlich* and socially unjust, etc.¹⁸ Nietzsche’s only difference, ironically, is that he affirms these prejudices instead of lamenting them. Nietzsche, who had never visited a Muslim country and whose closest brush with the ‘Orient’ was never going to be farther than the ‘southern’ sensuousness of Naples, relied on a familiar canon of Orientalists for his information about Islam and Arab culture. The fact that Nietzsche’s opposition to ‘progress’ led him to react positively to the kind of racial and generic defamations attributed to the Middle East by these ‘experts’ leaves us with an interesting dilemma: how do we interpret Nietzsche’s anti-democratic, misogynistic but nevertheless positive characterisation of Islam? Do we condemn it for conforming to a whole set of nineteenth-century stereotypes concerning these cultures, or do we interpret it as an anti-colonialist gesture—turning around the heavy machine of European Orientalism and using it to launch an ironic assault on the very modernity which produced it?

A second and by no means unrelated point lies in the fact that Nietzsche’s Islam is medieval. Partly because of the figures and events Nietzsche associates with it—Hafiz and the Assassins, feudal Arabs and Moorish Spain—and partly because of the feudalism and social structure which Nietzsche praises for being so untainted by any stain of European ‘civilization’. At times, this association of Islam with the Middle Ages can even be quite explicit (“In Morocco”, writes Nietzsche, “you get to know the medieval”).¹⁹ Islam, in other words, is not just geographically but also chronologically outside Europe: it is an idea, one which belongs outside history, hovering immutably in an almost Platonic way on the edges of the Mediterranean, denied any notion of development or *Geschichte*.

Nietzsche’s characterisation of Islam as a masculine or “manly” religion falls in line with this train of thought. That Nietzsche approved of a perceived Oriental subjugation of women is fairly well known—an attitude most famously expressed in the observation (from *Beyond Good and Evil*) that a “deep man . . . can think about women only like an Oriental”.²⁰ Not surprisingly, “Mohammedanism” is also praised for knowing the true position of women:

Mohammedanism, as a religion for men, is deeply contemptuous of the sentimentality and mendaciousness of Christianity—which it feels to be a woman's religion.²¹

The most obvious reasons why a Westerner might call Islam a “man's religion”—because of the perceived attitude towards women in Islamic society, and the famously documented references to women in the Koran—are never really examined by Nietzsche. Instead, Nietzsche appears to link Islam with masculinity for two different but connected reasons—because it *fights* and because, in contrast to ‘womanish’ Christianity, it *affirms*. Through scattered remarks, one can detect a militaristic perception of Islam on Nietzsche's part—an appreciation of the readiness of Islam to extol the defense of the faith (*jihad*) as a righteous deed. These remarks increase in number towards the end of the eighties, when Nietzsche's desire to understand exactly how the slave morality of Christianity came to triumph in Europe inevitably involves the fight against Islam and the *reconquista*. Thus we encounter remarks in the notebooks praising the proximity of the sacred and the sword in Islam, such as: “Comradeship in battle means in Islam fellowship in faith: whoever worships in our service and eats our butcher's meat, is a Muslim”.²² This conjunction of the holy and the bellicose appears to have fascinated the Nietzsche who, at least in some passages, seems to have seen war as the highest affirmation of life.²³ It comes as no surprise therefore that the Assassins—Hasan ben Sabbah's twelfth/thirteenth-century Ismaili sect of elite religious warriors who fought against the Crusades in Syria and the Abbasids in Iran—attract Nietzsche's attention for their combination of otherworldly devotion and “this-worldly” affirmation:

When the Christian Crusaders in the Orient came across the invincible order of the Assassins, those free spirits *par excellence*, whose lowest rank lived in a state of obedience which no order of monks has ever reached. (own translation)²⁴

These words, it should be said, belong to a passage where Nietzsche is admiring not so much the readiness of the Assassins to go to war, but the secret liberty of their esoteric doctrine: “Nothing is true. Everything is allowed”. Nietzsche's derogatory comparison of the Assassins with an order of monks emphasizes his Islamophilic rejection of Christianity; the virility of these Persian warrior-monks, unchained to any principle or ethic, are proffered over and above the ‘womanish’ Christian monks, trapped within the narrow walls of their ascetic, life-fleeing dogmas. Nietzsche seems to have been interested in the possibility of Islam possessing a secret, fundamentally amoral premise—the idea recurs again in *The Gay Science*, this time not with a medieval militant group but an eighteenth-century Arabian sect, the “Wahhabis”:

Thus the Wahhabis know only two mortal sins: having a god other than the Wahhabi god, and smoking (which they call “the infamous way of drinking”). “And what about murder and adultery?” asked the Englishman who found this out, amazed. “God is gracious and merciful,” replied the old chief.²⁵

The astonished Englishman is Palgrave—Nietzsche had lifted the story out of the 1867 German translation of his *Travels in Arabia*.²⁶ It is not difficult to see what caught Nietzsche’s imagination in both these cases of fundamentally esoteric nihilism: the paradoxical absence of values at the very heart of a faith built on rituals, a moral vacuum which (certainly in the case of the Assassins) does not paralyze action but on the contrary instigates and condones it. These Islamic warrior-monks, insists Nietzsche, are the true “free spirits” and not their cowardly European versions, who “haven’t been free spirits for a long time, for they still believe in Truth”.²⁷ It is difficult to think of any nineteenth-century thinker who would rate a medieval Muslim sect as more advanced than the *crème de la crème* of the European Enlightenment. “Has a European Christian freespirt ever lost itself in this sentence and its labyrinthine consequences?” (*Hat wohl je schon ein europaischer, ein christlicher Freigeist sich in diesen Satz und seine labyrinthinischen Folgerungen verirrt?*) (ibid.). Nietzsche’s Islam, in other words, is a source of free spirits, a belief system which can produce cultures of moral and ethical flexibility. Nietzsche’s generosity towards these knights of Islam does not extend towards their Christian counterparts, the “Switzers” of the Church,²⁸ whom Nietzsche considers to be nothing more than noble, Nordic animals who prostituted their aristocratic strength for pure material gain. Nietzsche’s bias towards Islam is unashamed here, and clearly just as driven by a hatred of German Christianity as by a love of Shi’ia Islam or Moorish Spain; if Islam’s advocacy of war is seen as characteristically affirmative and noble, medieval Christianity’s equally strenuous advocacy of the *Heiliger Krieg* is merely a ‘trampling down’ of stronger values by weaker ones, the victory of the *Chandala* and the rabble, so that “the whole ghetto-world [is] suddenly on top”.²⁹ Evidently, what is war for an “affirmative Semitic religion” such as Islam counts only as the trampling of a herd for a “negative Semitic religion” like Christianity.

Nietzsche, in whose works not a single quoted line from the Koran is to be found (particularly not such familiar Koranic descriptions of the world as a “plaything and a distraction”), clearly felt there to be something essentially *life-affirming* about Islam. Never appearing even slightly troubled by the core meaning of the word ‘Islam’ (meaning “submission”), Nietzsche saw Islam more often than not as a faith which refuses to be ashamed of ‘manly’ instincts such as lust, war and the desire to rule over others (Islam is, after all, “the product of a ruling class”³⁰). This resolve to extol the advantages of the Muslim faith at the expense of Christianity culminates

in probably the most significant passage on Islam Nietzsche ever wrote—section 60 of *The Antichrist*:

Christianity robbed us of the harvest of the culture of the ancient world, it later went on to rob us of the harvest of the culture of *Islam*. The wonderful Moorish cultural world of Spain, more closely related to *us* at bottom, speaking more directly to our senses and taste, than Greece and Rome, was *trampled down* (I do not say by what kind of feet): why ? because it was noble, because it owed its origin to manly instincts, because it said Yes to life even in the rare and exquisite treasures of Moorish life! . . . Later on, the Crusaders fought against something they would have done better to lie down in the dust before—a culture compared with which even our nineteenth century may well think itself very impoverished and very 'late'.

[. . .]The German aristocracy is virtually missing in the history of higher culture: one can guess the reason . . . Christianity, alcohol—the two *great* means of corruption . . . For in itself there should be no choice in the matter when faced with Islam and Christianity, as little as there should be when faced with an Arab and a Jew [. . .] One either *is* Chandalá or one is *not* . . . “War to the knife with Rome! Peace and friendship with Islam!”: this is what that great free spirit, the genius among German emperors, Friedrich the Second, felt, this is what he *did*.

In this brief but extraordinary passage, Nietzsche basically declares Muslims to be ‘one of us’. The *jasagende* culture of Islamic Spain is bundled together with the Renaissance as a late, doomed flourish of life-affirming thought, a kind of Nietzschean Prague Spring before the slumbering, suffocating weight of Christianity rolled in over it. The closeness of Nietzsche’s own association with Islam in this text is particularly striking—closer even “than Greece and Rome”, remarkable when one considers Nietzsche’s Hellenophilia. Islam, in this context, almost has an Eden-like air about it, a last pocket of Nietzschean innocence before the “corruption” of Christian values. Even Nietzsche’s familiar rejection of alcohol (a position reiterated several times throughout his work) seems to give an impression of Islamic sympathy, even if Nietzsche’s antipathy towards alcohol has more to do with its metaphysical proximity to reality-denying Christianity rather than any perceived loosening of one’s inhibitions.

‘War on Rome, Peace with Islam’—when one reads such Turco-Calvinist assertions, remarks which exalt the status of Islam almost to a point of utter solidarity, it is difficult to resist the tempting hypothesis: had Nietzsche’s breakdown not been imminent, would we have seen a work dedicated to Islam from his own pen—bearing in mind the steadily increasing number of references from the early eighties onwards, to Islam and the desire to see Eastern lands? If the answer to this question must lie in the negative, it is probably because Nietzsche says very little about what Islam *is*, but only

what it is *not*. Nietzsche's Islam is ultimately vacuous: a constructed anti-Christianity, admittedly associated with some figures and places, but fundamentally built on a certain *Gefühl*, one which feeds on anecdotes lifted out of Orientalist texts or gropes for symbolic figures like the Assassins or Hafiz in order to justify its assertions. Nietzsche's Islam never loses this combative, antagonistic function: Islam is incorporated into Nietzsche's vocabulary, adapted and utilised as a key motif in his argument, but never emerges as an object of interest in itself.

ISLAM AS JUST ANOTHER RELIGION

In the closing pages of his excellent study *Nietzsche and the Jews*, Siegfried Mandel concludes that "in choosing between . . . Jews and Arabs and between Islam and Christianity, [Nietzsche] chose Islam and the Arab". Although many of the ideas Nietzsche criticised in Christianity could also be found in Islam, "it did not suit Nietzsche's argument to note Mohammed's syncretic adaptations" of these Judaeo-Christian borrowings.³¹ Whilst this conclusion is true to a large extent, Mandel does not really investigate the many moments in the *Gesamtausgabe* where Nietzsche does appear to categorize Islam unproblematically as just another offshoot of Judaism, alongside Christianity. In contradiction to the spirit of Nietzsche's positive remarks concerning Islam, what we find in these passages is rather a religion just as judgemental, manipulative, life-denying and dishonest as the Christianity it is compared alongside.

The first characteristic which appears to link Christianity with Islam for Nietzsche is the fact that one does not *choose* such faiths, but is rather born into them: "People become Protestants, Catholics, Turks according to their native country, just as one who is born in a wine-growing land becomes a wine drinker".³² Protestants, Catholics, Turks—like its close relations, Islam is first and foremost a system of imposed beliefs one inauthentically adopts. The remark is early (October 1876) and orientates Nietzsche's general feelings about religion as a clever means of controlling and redescribing daily actions. Most of Nietzsche's derogatory or ambiguous remarks concerning Islam approach the faith from this premise of subtle control, even if the placing of Islam alongside other religions is not always consistent. In considering, for example, philosophers "from the Ural-Altaic linguistic zone" (by which Nietzsche presumably means Japanese as well as central Asian thought systems) "Indo-Germans" and "Muslims" are rather strangely categorized together as having a more developed "concept of the subject" than their 'Far Eastern' counterparts.³³ Nietzsche's point here is grammatical: the presence of a regularly used first- and second-person singular in Indo-European and Semitic languages facilitates the notion of *personal* obligation just as much in Stoicism and Kantian idealism as it does in Islam and Christianity. This idea of a common, unquestionable

morality—an “unconditional obedience”—in Western belief systems as different as “Stoics, the Christian and Arab orders . . . the philosophy of Kant” is often reiterated in Nietzsche.³⁴ Stoicism, we should not forget, was considered by Nietzsche to be the “work of Semites”—which is why we find the definition of the Stoic as “an Arabian Sheik wrapped in Greek togas and concepts”.³⁵ Neither Islam nor Arabs are exempted from this blanket vilification of Semitism’s God-centred imperative (“thou shalt”), which Nietzsche saw as no different in structure from the moral imperative of Kant (“I can therefore I must”).

If Nietzsche feels religions—and their founders—to be of a fundamentally manipulative nature, neither Islam nor Mohammed enjoy any special allowances. Sometimes Islam is dismissed generically against a backdrop of world religions—in *The Gay Science*, for instance, where the subject is the “wisdom of all founders of religions” in the construction of prayer:

Let them, like the Tibetans, keep chewing the cud of their ‘om mane padme hum’ innumerable times . . . or honor Vishnu with his thousand names, or Allah with his ninety-nine; or let them use prayer mills and rosaries: the main thing is that this work fixes them for a time and makes them tolerable to look at.³⁶

Nietzsche’s cynicism here extends just as much to the Sufi with his *tesibe* as it does to the Hindu chant and the *Ave Maria*. Prayer as no spiritual vehicle but rather a clever tactic to keep the attention of the simple-minded from wandering away from their day-to-day practices and onto the deeper *raison d’être* of what they do. In this passage, there is no temporal chart to show *how* these religions gradually used the quotidian habits of the common people to justify and strengthen their hold on them. Towards the end of the Eighties, however, Nietzsche seems to have felt that Christianity was the sole cause of a certain *metaphysical* corruption in Islam:

Mohammedanism in turn learned from Christianity: the employment of the ‘beyond’ as an instrument of punishment.³⁷

What was the only thing Mohammed later borrowed from Christianity? The invention of Paul, his means for establishing a priestly tyranny, for forming herds: the belief in immortality—that is to say the doctrine of ‘judgement’.³⁸

As Orsucci has shown, Nietzsche stumbled upon this idea of the Islamic *jennet* and *jehennem* as a Christian borrowing in Wellhausen’s *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*.³⁹ Two points are of interest: firstly, Nietzsche once again replicates in part the Christocentric assertions of European Orientalism which always depicted Christianity as the *fons et origo* of Islam—the only difference being that instead of crediting Christianity with a central influence

on Islam, Nietzsche *blames* it. Which suggests, secondly, that Nietzsche believed in the existence of an Ur-Islam which was originally uncontaminated by the ‘womanish’ (*weibliche*) metaphysics of Christianity and its obsession with the other world. An earlier Islam, perhaps, which was even more radically affirmative than the Islam Nietzsche sees in its current state. It is also interesting to note that Paul preserves his role in Nietzsche’s work as the epitome of *chandala* corruption and deceit—not simply as the polluter and falsifier of Christianity, but the polluter of Islam as well. In this case, at least, the “syncretic adaptations” (Mandel) of Judaeo-Christianity Nietzsche is forced to admit to within Islam are redescribed as the corrupting forces of Pauline theology—leaving Islam as something higher and fundamentally different from its Jewish and Christian predecessors.

Nietzsche does not always talk about Islam in this way, however. In the frequent associations Nietzsche makes between Mohammed and Plato, no suggestion is made that the former learnt anything from the latter. Both figures are seen as original and rather cunning law-givers—gifted moralizers who knew how to use concepts such as ‘God’ or ‘eternal values’ to control people’s consciences and acquire power. That Plato should be compared with Mohammed is hardly surprising: Nietzsche had always considered Plato to be an “instinctive Semite” (*Semit von Instinkt*) and a “symptom of decadence” (*Verfall-Symptom*), even if in some places the comparison does seem to be stretched to a peculiar extent:

What wonder is it that [Plato]—who, as he himself said, had the ‘political drive’ in his body—tried three times to stage a coup, where a collective Greek Mediterranean state had just appeared to form itself? In this and with his help Plato thought to do for all the Greeks, what Mohammed did for his Arabs: namely, to control the day-to-day living and traditions, great and small, of everyone . . . a couple of coincidences less, a couple of coincidences more, and the world would have experienced the Platonisation of southern Europe. (own translation)⁴⁰

If Nietzsche offers the Prophet Mohammed to us here as an Arab Plato, it is for three reasons. First of all (and here Nietzsche follows Herder and Schlegel) both figures have a talent for redescription—a singular ability for supplying a different, more attractive set of metaphors to describe the world of the common man. This does, of course, move somewhat nearer to the kind of eighteenth-century, Voltairesque stereotype of Mohammed as a cunning and manipulative impostor—even if Nietzsche had elsewhere dismissed Voltaire’s assessment of the Prophet as a resentment against “higher natures”.⁴¹ Once again, Nietzsche seems not so much to be disagreeing with European Orientalism, but rather affirming and celebrating the very aspects of Islam they purport to deplore. There seems to be with both figures a common emphasis on rhetorical imagination—the founder of Islam and the pupil of Socrates both achieve success (like all “great reformers”⁴²)

by a certain understanding of the world as a constantly describable collection of circumstances. Secondly, both figures are interested in power—in 'truth' as a means to power. There is nothing exclusively Islamic or Platonic about this idea of concepts such as 'will of God' or 'truth' as a way of controlling the existences of lesser natures; on the contrary, Nietzsche often remarks how "these concepts are to be found at the basis of all priestly organizations".⁴³ Although Nietzsche most famously applied this cynical use of such beliefs to Christianity, neither Islam nor the Lawbook of Manu (Nietzsche's example of an "affirmative Aryan religion") are exempt from this understanding of religious language as pure *Machtpolitik*.

Finally, and most subtly, there lies in this passage the implicit association of Nietzsche's imagined *Platonisierung des europäischen Südens* with the spread of Islam. Plato's attempt to found a "Mediterranean state" in Sicily acquires all the overtones of a Greek Mohammed, attempting to unite and control his fellow Hellenes in the same way the Prophet, nine centuries later, would bring together and forge an identity for the Arabs. The fact that Islam gained a brief foothold in Sicily underlines the proximity of the analogy, even if Nietzsche fails to comment on this directly. This implicit association of the Islamic expansion with the historical success of Platonism appears at odds with Nietzsche's later depiction of Moorish Spain as a bastion against the life-hating dogmas of a reality-slandering belief system. That Islam is virtually redescribed here as an 'Arab Platonism' underlines the genuine ambiguities towards Islam in Nietzsche's work. Nietzsche, as we have seen, considers Islam to be "an affirmative Semitic religion"; it remains difficult to say which of the two adjectives has the most importance for him. When Nietzsche needs a positive example of a Semitic faith to show by contrast how weak and malign Christianity is, Islam is invoked as a paragon of life-affirming values. When, on the other hand, a post-Platonic example of a cunning manipulator of the masses is required, Mohammed is presented as someone who uses the idea of an afterlife to control and subjugate his weaker brethren.

Taken all in all, Islam emerges in Nietzsche's work not as an affirmation of life in itself, but certainly the closest thing to a *jasagende* affirmation the Semitic religions have to offer. It is in this tone of unexpected merit, of comparative accolade, that Nietzsche lauds Islam—as a monotheistic metaphysics which, at least, is more life-embracing and 'manly' than its Judaeo-Christian sister faiths. This attitude of relative commendation is replicated in Nietzsche's praise of Hafiz, the fourteenth-century Persian poet. Just as Islam is a Semitic religion—but nevertheless an *affirmative* one, so Hafiz is presented to us not just as a Romantic, but as an affirmative example of Romanticism. Nietzsche's own definition of Romanticism as the "consequence of dissatisfaction with reality" is, in part, a response to Schopenhauerian pessimism.⁴⁴ Nietzsche's Romantic is someone whose gaze is constantly averted elsewhere, usually backwards, away "from himself and his world".⁴⁵ Nevertheless, as late as 1886 we find Nietzsche discerning

two ambiguous elements within Romanticism—a desire for destruction and change, and a parallel desire for eternity and being. To this second category belong Rubens, Goethe and Hafiz, artists for whom art stems “from gratitude and love”.⁴⁶ The vein in which Nietzsche speaks of Hafiz here is the same in which he speaks of the “rare and exquisite treasures of Moorish life”⁴⁷; Hafiz is associated with a this-worldly joy, a deification of the mundane, the transformation of the here and now, without succumbing to the Romantic weakness for deferral and postponement. In other words, Hafiz forms the ‘acceptable’ face of Romanticism, just as Islam forms the acceptable face of Semitism.

The question, however, remains: which Islam is Nietzsche’s Islam? Epileptic prophets⁴⁸ or manly warriors? A carbon copy of Judaeo-Christian mendacity or a wholly positive, life-affirming faith? An Islam based on control and submission, or one of joy and celebration? The absence of any real substance to Nietzsche’s understanding of Islam renders such questions superfluous; what we see in works such as *The Antichrist* is an interest in Islam which is ultimately semantic. Insofar as he saw Islam as a pool of signs and motifs to dip into and make use of for his own philosophical aims, Nietzsche differs from his Orientalist predecessors and their use of such imagery only in an exaggerated sympathy for Islam—a sympathy he expressed in his own unique and ultimately self-serving terms.

Conclusion

Having begun with Christianity, and ended on a note of anti-Christianity, a small number of modest points may tentatively be drawn. As this has been a study of eight thinkers in German thought—and not eighty—the word ‘tentative’ should be emphasized. The much wider question of how indicative major thinkers are of the cultural and political milieu in which they grew and crystallize—a question which, touching as it does on the enigma of idiosyncrasy, is by no means as straightforward as its organic metaphor suggests—underlies each of the points which follow.

In viewing the responses to Islam and Islamic cultures, certainly from Herder onwards, there seems to be something ineluctably fragmentary and conflicted in their composition. The diversity, and at times even contradictions, in each of our thinkers’ approaches to the Muslim Orient cannot entirely be explained by conventional reasons; they cannot simply be accounted for by the range of different subjects (a Sultan, a people, a language, a poem) each thinker responded to, nor by a notion of growth and development in the thinkers themselves. Neither does the conflicting collection of images and responses we encounter in these thinkers belong to an easily explicable paradox—the familiar savage Arab/noble poet, for example, which certainly explains some of the remarks we have encountered, particularly in German Romantic thinkers.

A polyphonic understanding of the human subject—the self as a constantly fluctuating collection of different societal forces, some of them mnemonically self-inscribing and self-repeating, which are modified and influenced by their engagement around a single historical point of authorship—emerges as the only way to attempt a history of Islam in German thought without lapsing into reductionism. This is not to deny the existence of patterns, *Leitmotifs*, common demonizations of Muslims or Turks in the eighteenth/nineteenth-century German mind, but to see the quantifiable primacy of such images as minor victories in a much more complex struggle in German thought to come to terms with the foreign, *das Fremde*. German thinkers’ attitudes towards the ‘Mohammedan’ have been much more ambiguous, and much more repressed, than commonly supposed. A clearer understanding of this situation will only take place once we stop thinking of authors as personalities who possess world-views, and start to see them as spaces in which discourses happen.

A second, less theoretical point has to do with the whole idea of how knowledge of a foreign culture actually resides in a society, and how holistic such a society is in the permeation of this knowledge. To lose oneself in the moral labyrinths of whether a thinker was 'right' or 'wrong' to take political sides against the Turk in 1770 or 1850, in the end, seems to be a fruitless exercise; a more meaningful and epistemologically verifiable task is to assess the degree of complexity a thinker was willing to attribute to the Muslim culture in question. What seems evident, in this study at least, is that the thinkers concerned knew a great deal more about Islam—and in particular about the Ottoman world—than they indicated in their writings. The complexity and contemporary historical presence of the Muslim world had something almost of a sexual secret about it, a faintly shameful awareness which, locked up in diaries, footnotes, letters and brief asides, would seldom be allowed to spill out messily into the open and disturb the discursive order of the day. Even an outsider such as Marx proved to be capricious and inconsistent in his emphasis on the 'development' of Turkey, stressing it to rebut Tsarist claims of savagery, but dropping it whenever the deletion of the Turk became a teleological necessity. The sobering implication of this selective understanding of the outside for our own institute-obsessed, research-driven, awareness-raising epoch may be that greater familiarity with a foreign culture has less influence than we think on the prejudices and stereotypes of our mainstream intelligentsia.

What remains to be further investigated, however, is the manner and modality of gaze which moved across these sources but failed to register their content. In the silence of their studies, as Goethe moved carefully through Diez's work on the Ottomans, as Hegel sifted through the endless newspaper reports on the Turks, did the reading gaze see but consciously choose not to reveal? Or were such thinkers, working within the logic of their narratives, simply unable to see such problemata from the outset? Would the sophistication of the Ottomans have been as invisible to them as the intelligence of women was to many chauvinists of the period—not *denied*, for it did not exist as a concept to be denied?

Leibniz seems to stand out as an exception in this respect—namely, as the one thinker in this book whose impression of the Muslim world genuinely appears to have been modified in a significant way through a greater familiarity with its languages and thought. As he is the earliest figure we have studied, it is tempting to historically locate this inability to compartmentalize problematic and narrative-upsetting information, and see it as an inability which was more or less overcome by the early German nineteenth century. At its most obvious, it may suggest a correlation between the *Romantik* cultivation of a multichambered self—and thereby, an increased capacity to multiply and prioritise/de-prioritise realities—and the ability to construct an imaginary Europe of tolerance and sophistication, abiding in blissful denial of an Ottoman world on

its borders every bit as complex and tolerant as its European neighbours. These are large sentences, however, and for now eight thinkers are not enough to hold them together.

A third point concerns the extent to which German responses to Islam differed from British, French or Italian ones. The moments of solidarity with Islam in this book, most explicitly found in Nietzsche, but also emanating from Marx and Herder, remind us not only of their Hohenstaufen/Calvinist precedents, but also of how a Protestant antipathy to Rome would colour the Orientalist responses of German thinkers to an enemy's enemy, however erratically. Scholars such as Polaschegg, in resisting a generic notion of European attitudes towards Islam, have argued for the "historically specific form" of German Orientalism,¹ an argument which has a great deal of validity—even if we should not overlook the extent to which non-German Europeans were influential upon the thinkers in this study: Gibbon on Hegel, Jones on Goethe, Bernier on Marx, not to mention a whole tradition of British- and French-language travel writing on Herder, Kant and Nietzsche.

A final point has emerged for me in the writing of this book. It concerns whether this study could be called, in any sense of the word, a Muslim history of German thought. The scholar Chakrabarty, in his classic work *Provincializing Europe*, writes of how English historians turned non-Western nations into "an imaginary waiting room of history"—with Significance and Modernity radiating out from their European origins towards the peripheries of history—whilst writers such as Amit Chaudhuri have equally lamented how Western interest in Middle Eastern/South Asian cultures is invariably confined to how the West has been received or represented in those cultures.² Of course, a real Muslim history of German philosophy would need to satisfy two requirements: a philosophical comparison of key ideas in both traditions—that of *tawhid* with *Einheit* or *al-haqq* with *Wahrheit*, or of parallel religious traditions, or of how far the hermeneutics of *Kitab* moved along the same grooves as those of the hermeneutical vocabularies beginning with Schleiermacher; secondly, attention would also have to be given to moments of possible Muslim influence on German thought, however indirect—the circulation of Sufi ideas, for example, not simply through their German-language manifestations in the early nineteenth century, but also mediated through the much-earlier writings of Lull and Maimonides, would need to be examined. The oft-cited similarity between the cyclical versions of history found in Hegel, Vico and Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* (1379) acquire a less hypothetical tone when we find Leibniz possessed an Arabic copy of the manuscript as early as 1697.

This history has dealt with neither of these requirements—there has been no examination of parallel philosophical concepts, and little real investigation into actual historical influences. What this book has tried to do, following Kant's own imaginary Turkish visitor to Europe, is to provide an idea of how a history of German thought might look to a Muslim

observer—more specifically, to an observer who was only interested in how their own culture and faith influenced, featured in and interacted with the German philosophical tradition. This makes it, somewhat paradoxically, both a Eurocentric and an Islamocentric text: ‘Eurocentric’ since the implications and ramifications of any of the representations of Islam we have studied have only been considered with regards to the European tradition itself, just as the fantasies of a patient are related back to the patient; ‘Islamocentric’ insofar as this book could equally have been a history of Judaism in German thought, or China, or Zoroastrianism. Endlessly stitching together one image after another to a growing tapestry is one of the luxuries available to the historian of ideas, and if this selective arrangement perpetuates the illusion of a tradition which was continually thinking about Islam, it perhaps justly overcompensates for a society which, for the most part, tried hard not to think about Muslims at all.

Notes

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. Cited in Jan Loop, “Kontroverse Bemühungen um den Orient”, in *Johann Jakob Reiske: Leben und Wirkung*, ed. Hans-Georg Ebert and Thoralf Hanstein (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005), p. 80.
2. F. Szakály, “Türkenherrschaft und Reformation im Ungarn um die Mitte des 16te Jahrhunderts”, *Etudes Historique Hongroises* II (1985): 451.
3. *A Short Memorial of the Most Grievous Sufferings*—cited in B. Köpeczi, *Staatsräson und Christliche Solidarität: Die Ungarischen Aufstände und Europa in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Boehlau, 1983), p. 135.
4. W. Daniel Wilson, *Humanität und Kreuzzugsideologie um 1780* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), p. 21.
5. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works* (New York/London: International Publishers, 1975), 2:182.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Taken from a letter to des Billettes (December 1696) in Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, vol. 2, ed. L. E. Loemker (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 475.
2. Found in Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaft (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923), 4:3, p. 776. All translations from the French/German/Latin of the *Sämtliche Schriften* are my own unless otherwise stated.
3. Splitting up Leibniz into various personalities is, admittedly, a familiar approach, certainly encouraged by Leibniz’s own extraordinarily transdisciplinary eclecticism. The critic Popkin has asked: “Do we have to have two, or maybe three, or four Leibnizes to make him compatible, or can we see all of this as part of the religious context of his ideas?” Popkin, “The Religious Background of Seventeenth Century Philosophy”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987): 48.
4. See *Consilium Aegyptiacum* (1671) in Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:1, p. 399.
5. Leibniz in a letter to Peter the Great—cited in F. Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 200.
6. Joseph McCarney, “Hegel’s Racism: A Response to Bernasconi”, *Radical Philosophy* 119 (May/June 2003).

7. See Leibniz, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. F. Heer (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1958), p. 58; Perkins, *Leibniz and China*, p. 207; J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 47; U. Eco, *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* (New York: Harvest, 1998), p. 70.
8. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:14, p. 378.
9. Leibniz in letter to Burnet, 1697—in *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:14, p. 449.
10. Perkins, *Leibniz and China*, p. 42.
11. Leibniz in a letter to Hiob Ludof, January 1693—*Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:9, p. 283.
12. Leibniz to Sparwenfeld, 1697—*Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:14, p. 761.
13. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:1, p. 336; Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought and Literature 1520–1660* (Paris: Boivin, 1938), p. 189. Georgiewitz published two books in 1544—*Les miseres et tribulations que les Chrestiens tributaires et esclaves tenuz par le Turcz seuffrent* and also *La Maniere et ceremonies des Turcs*. Both were translated into Latin and German, and enjoyed several reprints well into the seventeenth century. From a reference in Leibniz's 1683 satire *Mars Christianissimus*, we know that he had been familiar with the Latin edition of Georgiewitz's work, *De Turcarum moribus epitome*. See Leibniz, *Leibniz: Political Writings*, ed. P. J. Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 127.
14. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History*, p. 193. See Leibniz in "Bedencken", *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:2, p. 609.
15. Postel, for example, declares a sense of shame at the corruption of French courts in contrast with the perceived efficiency of the Turkish system. For more on this, see Rouillard, *The Turk in French History*, p. 298–306.
16. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 35.
17. P. M. Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), p. 25.
18. The scholar C. A. Nallino has shown this in his *Raccolta di scritti*, II (Rome, 1940)—cit. in Holt, *Studies in the Near East*, p. 28.
19. Kuhlmann and Leibniz had shared the same professor at Jena, Erhard Weigl. See Willhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Salvation Through Philology" in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, ed. P. Schäfer and M. Cohen (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), p. 261.
20. W. Schmidt-Biggemann, "Comenius' Politische Apokalyptik", *Studia Comeniana et Historica* 32 (2002): 78.
21. Schmidt-Biggemann, "Salvation Through Philology", p. 267.
22. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. P. Remnant and J. Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 507.
23. As is widely known, Leibniz had been a member of a Rosicrucian society during his brief stay in Nuremberg in 1667. Equally well known is the story, repeated by Leibniz's secretary Eckhart, that he had obtained membership of the alchemical society by crafting together a letter to the President using strange, mystical terms which Leibniz himself did not understand. E. J. Aiton, *Leibniz: A Biography* (Bristol: Adam Hilger, 1985), p. 25. Certainly, one study of the influence of the Kabbalist van Helmont on Leibniz has argued that Leibniz "took the Kabbalah extremely seriously", rationalizing "its more mythical and mystical elements . . . to the tastes of a more modern world". Alison P. Coudert, *Leibniz and the Kabbalah* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), p. 157.
24. *New Essays*, p. 508.

25. Richard Ariew makes this point in his "G. W. Leibniz, Life and Works", in *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, ed. Nicholas Jolley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 41.
26. "On The General Characteristic" (1679)—in Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 221. One of the standard orthodox objections against the Rosicrucians was that Rosencreutz's "learning came from Turkey and was therefore heathen". Rosencreutz was said to have returned from the East with his newfound wisdom—see F. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 141.
27. B. Russell, *A Critical Expansion of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 3.
28. Cited in Sheldon Pollack, "Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj", in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 86.
29. Taken from the *Consilium Aegyptiacum* in *Sämtliche Schriften* IV:1, p. 398.
30. Cited in Perkins, *Leibniz and China*, p. 200.
31. "Comparatio orientalis et occidentalis turcae", in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:3, note 42.
32. Cited in Perkins, *Leibniz and China*, p. 200.
33. "Preface to Nizolius", in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 125.
34. *New Essays*, p. 281.
35. *Ermahnung an die Deutschen, ihren Verstand und ihre Sprache besser zu üben, samt beigefügten Vorschlag einer deutschgesinnten Gesellschaft*. Found in Leibniz, *Leibniz*, ed. Heer, pp. 77–85.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
39. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers*, p. 130, note 5.
40. "Quelques reflexions sur la guerre", in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:2, p. 613.
41. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:2, p. 606.
42. *Ibid.*, 4:1, p. 388.
43. *Ibid.*, 4:2, p. 609.
44. *Ibid.*, 4:4, p. 81.
45. *Ibid.*, 4:4, p. 81; 4:4, pp. 5–6.
46. *Ibid.*, I:14, p. 609—Leibniz to de Monceaux, October 1697.
47. *Nouvelles Ouvertures*, p. 226.
48. *Sämtliche Schriften*, I:16, p. 706.
49. Taken from the *Theodicy*—cited in *Leibniz*, p. 173.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
51. Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. xi.
52. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:4, pp. 6–7.
53. Leibniz, *Political Writings*, p. 123.
54. D. J. Cook, "Leibniz's Use and Abuse of Judaism and Islam", in *Leibniz and Adam*, ed. M. Dascal and E. Yakira (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1993), p. 290.
55. See L. Valensi's "The Making of a Political Paradigm: The Ottoman State and Oriental Despotism", in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. A. Grafton and A. Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 173–203 for a fascinating account of how the reports of Venetian ambassadors returning from their diplomatic missions in Istanbul became "a kind of literary genre". More importantly, she examines how the

- Venetian representation of Ottoman rule mutated from a strong, legitimate, well-disciplined form of government, within the space of fifty years, into "the abhorred category of tyranny" (p. 199).
56. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:1, p. 383.
 57. For Luther's conviction of how it was impossible to keep one's Christian faith in a Turkish land, see Luther, *Luther's Works*, 46:175.
 58. *Ibid.*, p. 384—literally where the Saracens have "nested" *nidulati*.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 386.
 60. M. Dascal, "One Adam and Many Cultures: The Role of Political Pluralism in the Best of all Possible Worlds", in *Leibniz and Adam*, ed. M. Dascal and E. Yakhira (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1993), p. 390.
 61. Leibniz, *Political Writings*, "Letters to Thomas Burnet", p. 191.
 62. Number 49 in the *Monadology*—in Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. G. H. R. Parkinson (London: Dent, 1973), p. 186.
 63. Leibniz in a letter to Vergus, December 1697—cited in Perkins, *Leibniz and China*, p. 42.
 64. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:1, p. 393; *cum plerique nulla penitibus religione ducantur*.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
 66. Leibniz to Bossuet, 1692—cited in *Political Writings*, p. 190.
 67. Foucher de Careil, ed., *Oeuvres de Leibniz* (Paris, 1867), III:186—cited in Cook, "Leibniz's Use and Abuse of Islam and Judaism", p. 290.
 68. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 6:3, p. 625.
 69. "On the General Characteristic" (1679), in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 222.
 70. Leibniz in a letter to Remond, July 1714—in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 657.
 71. R. Lull, *Doctor Illuminatus: A Ramon Lull Reader*, ed. Antony Bonner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 85.
 72. Peter Fenves, "Of Philosophical Style—From Leibniz to Benjamin" *boundary 2*, no. 30 (2003): 73.
 73. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 2:411—cited in Fenves, "Of Philosophical Style", p. 73.
 74. "On the General Characteristic", in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 225.
 75. Leibniz to Thomasius, April 1669—in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 102.
 76. *Sämtliche Schriften*, IV:1, p. 335—cited in Cook, "Leibniz's Use and Abuse of Islam and Judaism", p. 290.
 77. *New Essays*, p. 336.
 78. "Discourse on Metaphysics", in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 321.
 79. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
 80. See Graham White, "Luther's Views on Language", *Journal of Literature and Theology* 3, no. 2 (July 1989): 188–218.
 81. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:1, p. 395.
 82. Leibniz to Bossuet, March 1693, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, I:9, p. 85–86.
 83. February 1695 in *Sämtliche Schriften*, I:11, p. 295.
 84. Leibniz to Larroque, November 1692—in *Sämtliche Schriften*, I:8, p. 548.
 85. *Theodicee* (Berlin: Berlin Akademie Verlag, 1996), p. 66.
 86. Perkins, *Leibniz and China*, p. 151.
 87. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
 88. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:1, p. 390.
 89. *New Essays*, p. 92. To be fair, Leibniz also has Theophilus remind us how "the Mohammedan authorities would customarily punish" such activities (*ibid.*).
 90. Cited in Coudert, *Leibniz and the Kabbalah*, p. 159.
 91. "A New Method for Learning and Teaching Jurisprudence", in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 89.

92. *New Essays*, p. 286.
93. Letter to van Hessen-Rheinfels, July 1692—*Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:8, p. 139.
94. For more on these remarks, see Stefano Gensini's "Leibniz Linguist and Philosopher of Language: Between 'Primitive' and 'Natural'", in *Leibniz and Adam*, ed. M. Dascal and E. Yakira (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1993), pp. 117–19.
95. "Consultation sur les affaires generales", in *Sämtliche Schriften*, 4:4, p. 479.
96. Letter to Landgraf Ernst, July 1692, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:8, p. 141.
97. To Burnett, 1697, *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:13, p. 552.
98. *New Essays*, p. 470.
99. May 1693, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:9, p. 426.
100. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:9, p. 283.
101. *New Essays*, p. 470.
102. Letter to Sparwenfeld, 1697, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:13, p. 546.
103. From Kant's *Anthropologie* (1798) in the *Gesammelte Werke*, 7:256.
104. Leibniz to Herzog 1677, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, II:1, p. 303.
105. *Ibid.*, 1:13, p. 543; 1:14, p. 761.
106. *Ibid.*, 1:13, p. 637.
107. *New Essays*, pp. 285–86.
108. *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1:8, p. 139.
109. Donald Rutherford, "Philosophy and Language in Leibniz", in *Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, ed. Jolley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 248.
110. Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Delhi: Yoda Press, 2001), p. xxxiii.
111. *New Essays*, p. 281.
112. For more on Müller and his descriptions of Indians, "our nearest intellectual relatives", see his collection of lectures *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2002), p. 11.
113. Gensini, "Leibniz Linguist and Philosopher of Language", p. 133.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. The text of *Anthropologie* is taken from Kant, *Kant: Werkausgabe*, ed. W. Weischadel (Suhrkamp: Frankfurt, 1968), vol. XII, p. 478—hereafter *Werkausgabe*.
2. *Werkausgabe*, p. 478.
3. John H. Zammito interprets Kant's famous criticisms of Herder's *Ideen* as springing from a desire to prevent "the dissolution of two essential boundaries upon which his philosophy rested (between matter and life, and between organisms and man)"—in "Method versus Manner?: Kant's Critique of Herder's *Ideen* in the Light of the Epoch of Science 1790–1820", in *Herder Jahrbuch* 1998, ed. H. Adler and W. Koepke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1998), p. 1.
4. *Werkausgabe*, II:983.
5. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. V. Politis (London: J. M. Dent, 1993), p. 4.
6. Taken from "Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie", in *Werkausgabe*, VI:378.
7. *Ibid.*, VI:378.
8. Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. J. T. Goldthwait (London: University of California Press, 1991), p. 109.

9. *Werkausgabe*, VI:396.
10. Taken from Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Prussian Academy, 1900-) vol. 2:267
11. taken from Lessing's *Sämtliche Werke*, 16:297—cited in Peter Fenves, *Arresting Language: From Leibniz to Benjamin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 101.
12. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 8:143—cited in Fenves, *Arresting Language*, p. 114.
13. Associations of Islam with the Anabaptists are as old as the Anabaptists themselves—see, for example, Susan R. Boettcher, "German Orientalism in the Age of Confessional Consolidation: Jakob Andrae's *Thirteen Sermons on the Turk*, 1568", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 9.
14. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 27:719.
15. Taken from *Physische Geographie* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 9:228.
16. *Ibid.*, 9:418.
17. *Ibid.*, 9:395.
18. Kant, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy", in *Race*, trans. J. M. Mikkelsen, ed. R. Bernasconi (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 48.
19. *Observations on the Feeling*, p. 112.
20. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 9:399.
21. *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6:428.
22. *Ibid.*, 7:256.
23. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. T. K. Abbott (New York: Dover, 1954), p. 125; *Werkausgabe*, VII:251.
24. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W. S. Pluhar (New York: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987), p. 134.
25. *The End of All Things* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 8:335.
26. *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 307.
27. E. Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant and Goethe* (London: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 48.
28. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6:87.
29. Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 11.
30. Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. J. Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 46:176, 15:340.
31. *Ibid.*, 43:235–36.
32. *Observations on the Feeling*, p. 110.
33. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6:194.
34. *Ibid.*, 6:193.
35. *Ibid.*, 2:252.
36. Susan Shell, "Kant as Propagator: Reflections on Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime", *Eighteenth Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2002): 456.
37. C. Altieri, "On the Sublime of Self-Disgust", in *Beauty and the Critic: Aesthetics in an Age of Cultural Studies*, ed. J. Soderholm (London: University of Alabama Press, 1997), p. 113.
38. Paul de Man, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant", in *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. A. Warminski (St. Paul: University of Minneapolis Press, 1996), p. 79.
39. N. Hertz, *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 109.
40. Yu Liu, "The Beautiful and the Sublime: Kant's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained", *Studies in Romanticism* 42, no. 3 (2003): 194.

41. *Critique of Judgment*, p. 134.
42. *Werkausgabe*, XII:478.
43. T. Weiskl, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 41.
44. Yu Liu, "The Beautiful and the Sublime", p. 193.
45. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6:184.
46. *Critique of Judgment*, p. 135; *Werkausgabe*, X:201.
47. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 15:120.
48. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, p. 116—cited in Amy Newman, "The Death of Judaism in German Protestant Thought from Luther to Hegel", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61, no. 3 (1993): 460.
49. Anidjar, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy*, p. 124.
50. *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 93—cited in Newman, "The Death of Judaism", p. 461.
51. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 9:399.
52. Taken from Ernest Behler, ed., *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe* (Munich, 1971), vol 9, p. 275—cited in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 99.
53. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. K. Smith (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965)—cited in D. Bonevac, "Kant's Copernican Revolution" in *The Age of German Idealism*, ed. R. C. Solomon and K. M. Higgins (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 57.
54. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 4:389—cit. in M. Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 407.
55. Cited in Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 406. For an introduction to this discussion, see B. Jacobs and P. Kain, *Essays On Kant's Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 5–7.
56. Cited in Jacobs and Kain, *Essays*, p. 5.
57. O. Bayer, *Vernunft ist Sprache: Hamanns Metakritik Kants* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 2002), p. 296—cited in John R. Betz's illuminating article "Enlightenment Revisited: Hamann as First and Best Critic of Kant's Philosophy", *Modern Theology* 20, no. 2 (April 2004): 298.
58. Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 14.
59. Robin May Schott, *Eros and Cognition* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), p. 110; Kurt Mosser, "Kant and Feminism", *Kant-Studien* 90, no. 3 (1999): 325; J. Flax, "The Patriarchal Unconscious" in *Discovering Reality*, ed. S. Harding and M.B. Hintikka (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983), p. 248.
60. Taken from *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 54–B78, cited in K. Mosser, "Kant and Feminism", p. 8.
61. Kant, *Lectures on Logic*, ed. J. M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 23.
62. *Werkausgabe*, XII:661.
63. Kant, "Über Schwärmerei und die Mittel Dagegen", in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. Rosenkranz and F. W. Schubert (Leipzig, 1838), vol. 7, pp. 111–13. Located with the help of E. Adickes's *German Kantian Bibliography* (Würzburg: Liebeng, 1896).
64. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 9:398, 406.
65. Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 38—cited in D. Becker, "Kant's Moral and Political Philosophy", in *The Age of German Idealism*, ed. R. C. Solomon and K. M. Higgins (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 73 .
66. Helmut Peitsch also makes this point towards the end of his article "Deutsche Peripherie und Europaisches Zentrum", in *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklaerung und Aufklaerungskritik in Herders Ideen*, ed. R. Otto and J. Zammito (Heidelberg: Synchro Wissenschaftsverlag, 2001), p. 82.

67. See *Luther's Works*, 46:195; Leibniz's letter to Landgraf Ernst, July 1692, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, I:8, p. 141; Nietzsche's letter to Köselitz, March 13, 1881—found in G. Colli and M. Montinari, eds., *Briefe* (Berlin, 1975), III:1, S.68.
68. C. Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien* (Copenhagen, 1772), p. 28—volume 14 of *Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science*, edited by Fuat Sezgin.
69. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 9:229.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
71. J. W. Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1999), p. 287; J. G. Herder, *Ideen* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1965), vol II, p. 421.
72. David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste", Essay XXII.
73. Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. H. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 106.
74. "Über Schwärmerei und die Mittel Dagegen", p. 113.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Herder, *Briefe*, ed. W. Dobbek and G. Arnold (Weimar: Bohlausnachfolger, 1979), 8:137. All translations from Herder are my own unless otherwise stated.
2. Taken from Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*—cited E. Behler, "'The Theory of Art has its Own History': Herder and the Schlegel Brothers" in *Herder Today*, ed. K. Mueller-Vollmer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), p. 247.
3. Letter to von Hesse, January 1771, in *Briefe*, 1:295.
4. Letter to Hamann, May 1784, in *Briefe*, 5:43.
5. For an excellent account of this, see F. C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern Political Thought 1790–1800* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 189–215.
6. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (London: Hogarth Press, 1976).
7. See Robert Leventhal's "The Critique of the Concept: Lessing, Herder and the Semiology of Historical Semantics", *Herder-Yearbook* 3 (1996): 93–110. See also Michael Morton's clearly irritated response to Leventhal, "Critical Realism and the Critique of the Concept" in *Herder Jahrbuch* 1998, pp. 177–90. Whatever Morton might feel about Leventhal's "sheer lack of comprehension", similar approaches have come from a number of different quarters. Russell Arben Fox has discerned similarities between Heidegger and Herder in a common emphasis on the separateness and independent nature of *Sprache*—"J.G. Herder on Language and the Metaphysics of National Community", *The Review of Politics* 65, no. 2 (2003). Joseph Simon, somewhat more cautiously, sees a prescient "consciousness of the problem of metaphysics" in Herder's critique of temporality (J. Simon, "Herder and the Problematicization of Metaphysics", in *Herder Today*, pp. 108–25). See also Andreas Herz, *Dunkler Spiegel—Helles Dasein. Natur, Geschichte, Kunst im Werk Johann Gottfried Herders* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1996), who has argued that Herder's replacement of the paradigm 'Consciousness' with the paradigm 'language' links Herder's philosophy of language with similar positions in French poststructuralism and contemporary hermeneutics.
8. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, p. 189; Samson B. Knoll, "Europe in the History of Humanity", in *Herder Jahrbuch* 1998, ed. H. Adler and W. Koepke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1998), p. 129; E. Adler, "Johann Gottfried Herder und das Judentum", *Herder Today*, p. 391.

9. *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, letter 122—in Herder, *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, ed. M. N. Forster (London: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 419—hereafter simply *Philosophical Writings*.
10. From *Auch Eine Philosophie* in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 283. Discordant voices have certainly been raised—see most recently D. Linker’s “The Reluctant Pluralism of J. G. Herder”, *The Review of Politics* 62, no. 2(2000), which argues that Herder’s apparent (and much lauded) pluralism actually conceals “the construction of a teleological philosophy of world history” (p. 268).
11. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881–1913), 32:143—hereafter simply *Sämtliche Werke*.
12. S. Hardiyanto’s *Zwischen Phantasie und Wirklichkeit: Der Islam im Spiegel des deutschen Denkens im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), p. 102.
13. William Shaw, *Travels or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant* (1738; repr., Westmead: Gregg International Publishers, 1972), p. viii.
14. Taken from the 1787 essay Jones, “On The Arabs”, in *The Works of Sir William Jones*, ed. R. D. Richardson Jr. (New York: Garland, 1984), 2:50.
15. Johann David Michaelis, *Literarischer Briefwechsel*, 1:305—cited in Loop, “Kontroverse Bemuhungen um den Orient”, p. 71.
16. Reiske, *Gedanken, wie man der arabischen Literatur aufhelfen koenne* (1757), p. 194—cited in Loop, “Kontroverse Bemuhungen um den Orient”, p. 80.
17. *Sämtliche Werke*, 32:142, 24:252.
18. *How Philosophy Can Become More Universal*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 5; *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 116.
19. Letter to Hamann, February 1765, in *Briefe*, 1:38; letter to Niebuhr, August 1788, in *Briefe*, 6:24.
20. *Sämtliche Werke*, 1:58.
21. *Ibid.*, 2:265.
22. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 313. E. A. Menze argues for the centrality of faith in understanding the composition of the *Ideen*, and suggests Herder’s contempt for Eurocentric pride has its origins in his religious beliefs, see Menze, “Religion as the ‘Yardstick of Reason’ and the ‘Primary Disposition of Humankind’ in Herder’s *Ideen*”, in *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklaerung und Aufklaerungskritik in Herders Ideen*, ed. R. Otto and J. Zammito (Heidelberg: Synchro Wissenschaftsverlag, 2001), p. 45. Critics such as Beiser, on the other hand, see Herder as someone who essentially secularised Hamann’s thought (Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, p. 195).
23. *Briefe*, 2:84.
24. *Sämtliche Werke*, 1:58; *On the Cognition and the Sensation of the Human Soul*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 220; *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1965), II:420—hereafter *Ideen*.
25. *Sämtliche Werke*, 8:360.
26. Letter to Schroeder, May 1803, in *Briefe*, 8:356.
27. *Sämtliche Werke*, 1:58.
28. *Auch eine Philosophie*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 357.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
30. *Sämtliche Werke*, 1:58.
31. *Auch eine Philosophie*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 311; *Ideen*, II:312.
32. *Sämtliche Werke*, 8:360.
33. Letter 121, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 411.
34. *Ideen*, II:421.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 421.
36. *Sämtliche Werke* 1:58
37. *Ideen* II:422
38. From *Auch eine Philosophie*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 336.
39. *Letters Concerning the Advancement of Humanity*, in *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 367, 394.
40. *Sämtliche Werke*, 9:39.
41. *Ibid.*, 15:81.
42. *Ibid.*, 32:142.
43. Luther, *Luther's Works*, 8:187.
44. *Vom Einfluss der Regierung auf den Wissenschaften*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, 9:341.
45. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 220.
46. *Von der Annehmlichkeit, Nutzlichkeit und Notwendigkeit der Geographie*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, 30:108.
47. *Sämtliche Werke*, 32:142; from the *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 161.
48. *Sämtliche Werke*, 13:339—cited in G.A. Craig, "Herder: The Legacy", *Herder Today*, p. 25.
49. *Auch eine Philosophie*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 293.
50. *Sämtliche Werke*, 1:82.
51. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 220.
52. *Sämtliche Werke*, 8:360–61.
53. A. Sonderegger, *Jenseits der rassistischen Grenzen* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 122.
54. John Zammito tries to find a compromise between acknowledging Herder's cultural prejudices and yet still appreciating him as a "complete anthropologist", in contrast to the "poor impression" of Kant's own interest in the subject. Towards the end of his *Kant, Herder and the Birth of Anthropology* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2002) he admits, thinking primarily of Herder's views of the Chinese, that the thinker's "pluralism was not quite so impeccable". Zammito argues, nevertheless, that even Herder's "cultural contempt" seems less repugnant, and tied to its time, than Kant's "biological disqualification" of entire peoples.
55. *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, p. 11.
56. *Treatise*, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 67; *Sämtliche Werke*, 8:363; *Fragments on Recent German Literature*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 52.
57. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, in *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), VI/3, p. 246.
58. Letter 116, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 39.
59. Letter to Karoline, September 1772, in *Briefe*, 2:238.
60. *Ideen*, II:434.
61. *Ibid.*, II:312.
62. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 338.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
65. *Ideen*, p. 312
66. *Sämtliche Werke*, 17:161—cited in C. Kamenetsky, "The German Folklore Revival in the Eighteenth Century", *Journal of Popular Culture* 6, no. 4 (1973): 842.
67. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 5.
68. *Ideen*, II:436.
69. Letter to Zollkontrollor Begrow, November 1769, in *Briefe*, 1:172–73.
70. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 384.

71. *Auch eine Philosophie*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 301.
72. *Philosophical Writings*, p. 163.
73. Taken from the *Adrastea*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, 23:44—cited in W. Gese-
mann, “Herder’s Russia”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 26, no. 3 (1965):
432.
74. S. Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*
(London: Verso, 1999), p. 216.
75. *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 399, 396.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 390.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. “The Fairy Tale”—also translated as “Novelle”—is found in Goethe, *Fairy Tales, Short Stories and Poems*, ed. J. W. Thomas (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), p. 113. The two main German editions of Goethe’s texts used—amongst the many—are *Goethes Werke. Hg. im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen*, IV sections, 143 vols., Weimar 1887–1919 (hereafter the *Weimar Ausgabe*) and *Goethes Werke*, ed. Erich Trunz, 14 vols., Hamburg 1948–1964 (hereafter the *Hamburger Ausgabe*). All other texts and editions are named individually.
2. Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan: Studienausgabe*, ed. von M. Knapp (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999), pp. 210, 209.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
4. Taken from Benjamin’s essay “Goethe”, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume Two*, ed. M. W. Jennings (London: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 186.
5. “Serbische Lieder”, from the *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.41.ii p. 142.
6. *Hamburger Ausgabe*, III.306.
7. From Goethe’s foreword to “Cours de littérature grecque moderne par Jacoby Rizo Neroulos”, in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.41.ii pp. 316–20.
8. *West-östlicher Divan*, p. 327.
9. K. Mommsen, *Goethe und der Islam* (Stuttgart: Goethe Gesellschaft, 1964), p. 7; S. H. Abdel-Rahim, *Goethe und der Islam* (Augsburg: Blasaditch, 1969), p. 367.
10. M. Weber, *Der “wahre Poesie-Orient”: eine Untersuchung zur Orientalismus-Theorie Edward Saids am Beispiel von Goethes “West-östlichem Divan” und der Lyrik Heines* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), pp. 123, 122. Wilson also examines *Iphigenie* as a play which, although set in classical Scythia, is in reality about the Turks—Wilson, *Humanität und Kreuzzugsideologie um 1780* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984). The debate continues and shows no signs of remission. David Bell has recently argued, with rather more indignation than logic, that within the *Divan* lies “a shared vision that blurs the distinction of East and West” (p. 206), a fusion which presupposes equality and therefore indicates how “the objectives of Goethe and Said may be convergent”; see David Bell, “Goethe’s Orientalism” in *Goethe and the English-Speaking World*, ed. N. Boyle and J. Guthrie (New York: Camden House, 2002), p. 211. Kontje acknowledges an “imperial imagination” but insists on an awareness, on the poet’s part, of the constructedness of his images: “What makes Goethe’s Orientalism particularly interesting is the balance he maintains between empathy and irony” (T. Kontje, *German Orientalisms* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002], p. 132). The Turkish-German novelist Zafer Senocak, in his *War Hitler Araber?*, sees the *Divan* as indirectly collaborating in the whole machine of imperialism (pp. 39, 49).

11. *Hamburger Ausgabe*, 11:396.
12. *West-östlicher Divan*, pp. 595, 560.
13. Taken from a letter to Cotta (November 1805) in *Weimar Ausgabe*, IV:19.76.
14. *Torquato Tasso*, in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.10.130; *Götz von Berlichingen*, in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I:13i.250.
15. *Weimar Ausgabe* I:3.213. Jane K. Brown also emphasizes the unignorable role irony and parody play in a writer as sophisticated as Goethe—see *Goethe's Cyclical Narratives: Die Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten and Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 3.
16. Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1982), p. 46. Goethe was even personally acquainted with people directly involved in the Russian-Turkish war, including the brother-in-law of Count Reinhard (p. 312).
17. For an excellent analysis of the text, see Cornelia Kleinlogel, *Exotik-Erotik: Zur Geschichte des Türkenbildes in der deutschen Literatur der frühen Neuzeit (1453–1800)* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 344–52.
18. Taken from Gespräche mit Friedrich von Müller on November 18, 1824.
19. Byron in a letter dated 1805—see *Travels in Albania and Greece*, p. 252.
20. *West-östlicher Divan*, p. 443.
21. Diez had been involved in a particularly unpleasant and abusive quarrel with the translator von Hammer—for more on this, see the first chapter of K. Mommsen, *Goethe und Diez* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961).
22. Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien* (Berlin/Halle: Hallesche Waisenhaus-Buchhandlung, 1815), II:102.
23. *West-östlicher Divan*, p. 419; November 8, 1824 with Friedrich von Mueller.
24. *Hamburger Ausgabe—Briefe*, III.453.
25. J. K. Noyes, “Goethe on Cosmopolitanism and Colonialism: *Bildung* and the Dialectic of Critical Mobility”, *Eighteenth Century Studies* 39, no. 1 (2006): 445.
26. Kontje, *German Orientalisms*, p. 124.
27. For an interesting examination of Goethe's relationship to conservatives such as Metternich and Möser, see Virgil Nemoianu's informative essay “From Goethe to Guizot: The Conservative Contexts of Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre”, *Modern Language Studies* 31, no. 1 (2001): 45–58.
28. These excerpts from the brief correspondence between Diez and Goethe, which barely covered the span of two years, can be found in Goethe, “Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und v. Diez” (mitgeteilt von C. Siegfried), in *Goethe-Jahrbuch XI*, ed. L. Geiger (Frankfurt: Rütten and Loening, 1890), pp. 30, 28, 32. I am indebted to Walter Veit's article “Goethe's Fantasies about the Orient”, *Eighteenth Century Life* 26, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 164–80 for drawing my attention to this source.
29. See Goethe's letters of September and December 1820 in *Hamburger Ausgabe—Briefe*, III:490, 497.
30. *West-östlicher Divan*, p. 268.
31. See *Maskenzug* (“Demetrius”), in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.16.294.
32. Wilson, *Humanität und Kreuzzugsideologie um 1780*, p. 21.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
34. See J. Grimm and W. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Munich: DTV, 1984), 22:1852.
35. Taken from a letter to Lavater (July 29, 1782)—cited in H. B. Nisbet's “Religion and Philosophy”, in *Cambridge Companion to Goethe*, ed. L. Sharpe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 219.

36. Taken from Goethe's final hours with Eckermann on March 11, 1832—cited in Nisbet, "Religion and Philosophy", p. 220.
37. *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.41.ii.
38. Taken from the seventeenth book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in the *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.29.67.
39. Hanser, 1.1.518–19.
40. *West-östlicher Divan*, p. 211.
41. Eckermann, *Gespräche*, p. 385.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
44. Letter to August von Goethe, July 5, 1830—in *Hamburger Ausgabe—Briefe*, IV:387.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 315, April 12, 1829.
46. From *Philipp Hackert*, in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.46.342, 347, 347.
47. From *Heldenlieder*, in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.3.213, line 25.
48. *Ibid.*, lines 4, 11–12.
49. Although hardly in agreement with British rule in Ireland, Goethe's reservations concerning the Irish Catholics—whom he saw, in general, as a "pack of dogs" who constantly fought with one another until a Protestant appeared to draw them together—are most sharply expressed in a conversation with Eckermann (April 7, 1829, p. 298). Filiz Turhan rightly points out how "Byron acknowledged the similarity between British treatment of the Irish and Turkish treatment of the Greeks in the notes to *Childe Harold* canto II"—see F. Turhan, *The Other Empire: British Romantic Writings about the Ottoman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 115.
50. *Heldenlieder*, in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.3.214, lines 21–28.
51. W. Daniel Wilson emphasizes Goethe's "far-sighted . . . categorical rejection of war"—"Goethe and the Political World", in *Cambridge Companion to Goethe*, p. 214. For a concise representation of Goethe's views towards the military conflicts of his period, see J. R. Williams's *The Life of Goethe* (London: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 1–53.
52. Goethe to Diez February 1, 1816—in *Goethe-Jahrbuch* XI, p. 33.
53. Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II:105.
54. *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.41.ii.317.
55. Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, I:xxi.
56. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 168.
57. Diez to Goethe, November 28, 1815—in *Goethe-Jahrbuch* XI, p. 32.
58. Cited in Mommsen, *Goethe und der Islam*, p. 26.
59. "Anforderung an den modernen Bildhauer", in *Weimar Ausgabe*, I.49.ii.55.
60. Cited in Gretchen L. Hachmeister, *Italy in the German Literary Imagination* (New York: Camden House, 2002), p. 47.
61. Anidjar, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy*, p. 28.
62. "In Istanbul I was very near becoming a Mussulman"—Byron's words as reported by Lady Byron in Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1994), p. 224. Byron's words concerning the 'pollution' of St. Sofia can be found in *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto II, stanza 79, line 749.
63. *West-östlicher Divan*, p. 629.
64. Eckermann, *Gespräche*, p. 299.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 408.
66. Diez to Goethe, *Goethe-Jahrbuch* XI, p. 25.
67. Goethe to Diez, *ibid.*, p. 30.
68. Diez to Goethe, November 13, 1816, *ibid.*, p. 39.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 40–41.

70. Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II:105.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler et al. (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 1958), 30:222. All references taken from this edition unless otherwise stated.
2. —cited in T. Kontje, *German Orientalisms*.
3. *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 6:131.
4. Cited in D. Figueira, "Politics of Exoticism and Schlegel's Metaphorical Pilgrimage to India", *Monatshefte* 81, no. 4 (1989): 427.
5. *Philosophische Fragmente*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 18:138.
6. 24:206; 14:129; 21:235.
7. *Fragmente zur Poesie I*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 16:364.
8. 2:197, cited in M. Chaouli, *The Laboratory of Poetry: Chemistry and Poetics in the Work of Friedrich Schlegel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 33.
9. 22:265, 18:93, 20:28.
10. L. R. Johnson, *The Art of Recollection in Jena Romanticism* (Tuebingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 2002), p. 5.
11. Chaouli, *The Laboratory of Poetry*, p. 4.
12. For a scholar who relates Schlegel directly to many themes in continental contemporary criticism, see M. P. Bullock, *Romanticism and Marxism: The Philosophical Development of Literary Theory and Literary History in Walter Benjamin and Friedrich Schlegel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987). Bullock interprets Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* as a text written before its time—a text which "exorcise[s] the element of onto-theology from its grasp of textuality" and therefore has only become "legible in its constellation with our time after generations of misapprehension" (pp. 38–39).
13. 16:326, 331, 433; 19:321.
14. Schlegel, *Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis*, ed. M. Preitz (Darmstadt: Gentner, 1957), p. 130.
15. *Zur Philosophie und Theologie*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 19:322.
16. 16:255.
17. 16:330.
18. *Zur Geschichte und Politik*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 20:304.
19. See 16:49, 263; 24:206.
20. *Vorlesungen ueber Universalgeschichte*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 14:133.
21. See, respectively, 20:292, 6:126–27, 14:132.
22. 17:370, 347.
23. F. C. Beiser, *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xvii.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–26.
25. *Zur Poesie und Litteratur*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 16:265.
26. K. K. Polheim, *Die Arabeske* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schoeningh, 1966), p. 22.
27. 16:265.
28. Schlegel *Ausgabe* 16:312.
29. Taken from Goethe's essay *Von Arabesken* (1789)—cited in Polheim, *Die Arabeske*, p. 18.
30. see Chaouli, *The Laboratory of Poetry*, p. 120.
31. See Polheim, *Die Arabeske*, pp. 27, 28, 361.
32. *Zur Geschichte und Politik*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 22:245–46.

33. 14:129.
34. Schlegel Ausgabe 22:373.
35. See J. S. Librett, "Figuralizing the Orient, Literalizing the Jew", *German Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (1996); Kontje, *German Orientalisms*, p. 107.
36. Gary Handwerk, "Envisioning India: Friedrich Schlegel's Sanskrit Studies and the Emergence of Romantic Historiography", *European Romantic Review* 9 (Spring 1998): 231–42.
37. 8:115.
38. 16:458.
39. *Zur Philosophie*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 18:487.
40. *Ibid.*, 20:43; 15.1:38; 20:303.
41. *Zur Geschichte und Politik*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 22:94.
42. *Ibid.*, 14:159; 15.1:51; 20:61.
43. He had spoken of the first bloom of Christianity as having been Oriental (20:80).
44. 18:56; 20:274.
45. *Vorlesungen ueber Universalgeschichte*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 14:129, 131.
46. *Ibid.*, 8:275.
47. *Ibid.*, 22:369.
48. See Hans-Georg Ebert and Thoralf Hanstein's fascinating collection of essays *Johann Jakob Reiske: Leben und Wirkung* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005)—in particular, Jan Loop's "Kontroverse Bemuhungen um den Orient". Sir William Jones, in 1771, had also asserted that Hebrew, "Chaldaick and Syriack" were dialects of Arabic—see his introduction to *A Grammar of the Persian Language* (Mentson: Scholar Press, 1969), p. xxii.
49. *Zur Geschichte und Politik*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 20:364.
50. *Zur Philosophie*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 19:241.
51. Novalis, *Novalis Dichtungen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002), p. 37.
52. See S. V. Hellerich's book *Religionizing, Romanizing Romantics* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995) for an interesting account of Schlegel's own spiritual development and idiosyncrasies. Hellerich argues a growing appreciation of medieval art and history, alongside a disenchantment with his Protestant circle of friends, gradually brought Schlegel into the Catholic church. By 1813, reports Hellerich, Schlegel's wife could complain that her husband cared less about religion than about good food and wine (pp. 183–84, 149).
53. *Zur Geschichte und Politik*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 20:115.
54. See J. C. Krause, *Geschichte der wichtigsten Begebenheiten des heutigen Europa* (Halle: Hemmerde und Schwetschke, 1796), 4:III, in particular pp. 5, 13, 16. Krause also correctly points out how the forced conversion of Christians in Muslim Spain actually went against the principles of Islam itself (p. 16).
55. *Ibid.*, 20:144.
56. *Ibid.*, 20:213.
57. M. Finlay, *The Romantic Irony of Semiotics: Friedrich Schlegel and the Crisis of Representation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), p. 266.
58. *Zur Philosophie*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 19:49.
59. 20:83.
60. 20:117.
61. *Ibid.*, 18:56.
62. *Zur Poesie und Litterature*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 16:326.
63. *Ibid.*, 16:31, 368; 18:138.
64. *Ibid.*, 16:363.
65. *Ibid.*, 20:73.
66. *Ibid.*, 20:386.

67. Ibid., 22:213.
68. Ibid., 21:26.
69. Ibid., 22:72.
70. Ibid., 22:293.
71. Schlegel, *Friedrich Schlegel: Werke in zwei Bänden*, ed. W. Hecht (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1988), p. 116.
72. 22:293. For an examination of thirteenth-century numerological interpretations of Islam, see David Burr's "Antichrist and Islam in Medieval Franciscan Exegesis" and Philip Krey's "Nicholas of Lyra and Paul of Burgos on Islam" in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John V. Toran (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 131–74.
73. From *Gedanken* (1808), in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 19:282.
74. *Zur Geschichte und Politik*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 22:182.
75. Ibid., 22:208.
76. Ibid., 22:311.
77. See, for example, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 6:193.
78. From *Orientalia*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 15.1:72.
79. 14:132.
80. From *Studien zur Philosophie und Theologie*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 8:93.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., 14:129.
83. Ibid., 8:276.
84. Ibid., 19:285.
85. From *Philosophie der Geschichte*, in *Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 9:275.
86. 18:29; 21:28.
87. 22:339.
88. "On War Against the Turk"—found in *Luther's Works*, 46:194, 180.
89. S. F. Guenther Wahl, *Der Geist und die Geschichte des Schach-Spiels* (1758; repr., Wiesbaden: Fourier Verlag, 1981). Wahl's book offers, in its endless examples of gifted chess players, a wholly erudite and intellectually vibrant picture of the Muslim world—whether it is a tolerant Suleyman the Magnificent who rewards a blind chess-master for winning his match (p. 32), or the Turkish chess-master who came to Florence and beat two of the three Europeans he played simultaneously (p. 29).
90. Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language*, p. vii.
91. Julius Augustus Remer, *Handbuch der neuern Geschichte*, 5th ed. (Braunschweig, 1824), 2:453, 269.
92. 20:228.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H. Glockner (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1949), 11:3, cited in B. Stemmrich-Köhler, *Zur Funktion der orientalischen Poesie bei Goethe, Herder, Hegel* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992), p. 187.
2. *Eine Schnur von Perlen, durchaus im Sinne und Geist des Rittertums . . . reich an Gehalt und voll vielseitiger Interessen in Rücksicht auf Liebe, Ehe, Familienstolz, Ehre und Herrschaft der Könige im Kampf der Christen gegen die Mauren*.

Hegel, *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 15:405—hereafter *Werke*.

3. F. C. Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism", in *Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. F. C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 287.
4. Robert Bernasconi, "With What Must the Philosophy of World History Begin? On the Racial Basis of Hegel's Eurocentrism", *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 22 (2000): 173—the editor cited is Eduard Gans.
5. John K. Noyes, "The Fate of Negativity after Empire" (unpublished).
6. Leuze cited in S. Hardiyanto's *Zwischen Phantasie und Wirklichkeit: Der Islam im Spiegel des deutschen Denkens im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), p. 131; E. Schulín, *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung des Orients bei Hegel und Ranke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958), p. 122.
7. Stemmrich-Köhler, *Zur Funktion*, pp. 181–82.
8. See Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 1–25. The notion of the *Phenomenology* as a kind of journey or narrative has been a widespread perception—see, for example, A. W. Levi's "Hegel's Phenomenology as a Philosophy of Culture", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (1984): 446. Derrida's essay on Hegel and Bataille, where Derrida remarks how laughter is absent from the Hegelian system (p. 256), can be found in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 251–77.
9. Hegel to Niethammer, August 9, 1827—in Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1954), III:175; T. Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 251.
10. Pinkard, *Hegel*, p. 390.
11. L. Dickey, "Hegel on Religion and Philosophy", *Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, p. 304.
12. *Werke*, 12:22; *Die Geschichte aber haben wir zu nehmen, wie sie ist; wir haben historisch, empirisch zu verfahren.*
13. VG 18—cited in Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism", p. 286.
14. *Werke*, 7:197; Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996), 12:462.
15. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Pubs, 1957), p. 359.
16. J. Hoffmeister, ed., *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung* (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1936), p. 52.
17. See VPG 816. The catalogue of books in Hegel's Berlin library can be found in *Verzeichniss der von dem Professor Herrn Dr Hegel und dem Dr Herrn Seebeck hinterlassenen Bücher-Sammlungen* (Berlin, 1832).
18. Charles de Peyssonel, *Examen du Livre intitulé Considerations sur la Guerre Actuelle des Turcs par M. de Volney* (Amsterdam, 1788), pp. 25, 305.
19. *Briefe von und an Hegel*, II:153, 177.
20. Johannes von Müller, *Allegemeiner Geschichte besonders der europäischen Menschheit* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'scher Verlag, 1839), pp. 418, 541.
21. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 117.
22. Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. David Womersley (London: Allen Lane, 1994), vols. V and VI, p. 151.
23. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3*, 12:460.
24. See, respectively, *Edinburgh Review* 28:56 (August 1817), p. 304 and 32:64 (October 1819), p. 264.
25. J. G. Buhle, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1799), IV:3, V:43.
26. *Ibid.*, V:49–55.

27. W. R. Beyer, *Zwischen Phänomenologie und Logik: Hegel als Redakteur der Bamberger Zeitung* (Köln: Paul Rugenstein Verlag, 1974), p. 36.
28. See in the *Bamberger Zeitung* of 1807 the editions 1st through 5th April, 23rd October, 6th April, 2nd October and 14th August respectively.
29. See Pinkard, *Hegel*, p. 243, and also Beyer, *Zwischen Phänomenologie und Logik*, p. 38.
30. *Die Verfassung Deutschlands*, I:471; *das unbeschränkste einer Despotie*.
31. See *Bamberger Zeitung* editions April 1–5, 1807.
32. Hegel to his wife, September 3, 1829—in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, III:270.
33. *Über die englische Reformbill*, XI:97.
34. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3*, 12:460.
35. *Werke*, 7:197.
36. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3*, 12:461.
37. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. P. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), II:242.
38. Taken from section 44 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*—in Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, ed. S. Houlgate (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 156—italics are all Hegel's.
39. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, II:244.
40. Hegel, *Lectures on Philosophy of World History*, ed. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 206.
41. *Werke*, 12:285; *gegen die einfache, sich selbst gleiche Klarheit des Moham-medanismus*.
42. *Werke*, 12:514.
43. *Ibid.*, 1:376.
44. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, ed. F. Bassenge (Weimar, 1976), II:128.
45. Letter to Niethammer, May 7, 1809—in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, I:283.
46. Letter to Niethammer, November 1807—in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, I:195.
47. Taken from paragraph 15 in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—in Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 52.
48. Letter to his wife, September 24, 1824—in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, III:64.
49. Hegel, *Frühe Schriften* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1989), I:139.
50. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, in *Werke*, 16:216.
51. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, II:407, 433.
52. *Werke*, 12:510; *eingesetzt, heimliche Juden, Mauren und Ketzer zu verfolgen*.
53. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 393.
54. *Werke*, 12:470; *um ihn handelt es sich*.
55. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 358.
56. *Werke*, 12:227.
57. Letter to Niethammer, April 29, 1814—in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, II:27.
58. For a fascinating insight into Hegel and the whole question of sexuality, see the chapter on Hegel in Calvin Thomas's *Male Matters: Masculinity, Anxiety, and the Male Body on the Line* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 47–73.
59. Pinkard, *Hegel*, pp. 410, 451.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 448, 451.
61. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3*, 12:458.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
63. Luther, *Luther's Works*, 46:178.

64. *Luther's Works*, 3:66.
65. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 358.
66. *Werke*, 19:521.
67. *Werke*, 3:103; *und Zusammenhang mit Anderem ist das Aufhören des Für-sich-seins*.
68. *Aphorismen aus Hegels Wastebook* II:540 Bei der Entstehung des Protestantismus hatten alle Schismen des Katholizismus aufgehört.—Jetzt wird die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion immer bewiesen, man weiß nicht, für wen; denn wir haben doch nicht mit den Türken zu tun.
69. Letter to Niethammer, July 12, 1816—in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, II:89.
70. Pinkard, *Hegel*, p. 224.
71. Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 495.
72. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, III:242–43.
73. *Ibid.*, II:500.
74. *Werke*, 12:140; Hegel, *Lectures on Philosophy of World History*, p. 206; Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. 94; *Werke*, 8:283, 14:213.
75. *Werke*, 19:493.
76. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, I:78.
77. *Ihr blinden Juden, Türken und Heiden*—in *Werke*, 20:115. Hegel's knowledge of key figures in the Hermetic tradition such as Böhme is astounding. Glenn Alexander Magee has argued quite convincingly for Hegel's status as a Hermetic thinker—see his informative and highly readable book *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
78. Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 499.
79. *Werke*, 19:515.
80. In a letter to Hegel (November 28, 1808) Heinrich Paulus included a number of Arabic letters in parentheses—see *Briefe von und an Hegel*, I:265.
81. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3*, 12:458.
82. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, II:158.
83. *Ibid.*, III:242.
84. *Werke*, 7:157; *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, III:243; *Werke*, 12:226.
85. *Werke*, 10:386; *in der schönsten Reinheit und Erhabenheit*.
86. *Werke*, 15:398; *an den romantischen Charakter der spanischen Ritterlichkeit erinnern können*.
87. *Werke*, 14:241; *Hierfür geben besonders die Perser und Araber in der morgenländischen Pracht ihrer Bilder, in der freien Seligkeit der Phantasie. . . , ein glänzendes Vorbild selbst für die Gegenwart und die subjektive heutige Innigkeit ab*.
88. Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 457.
89. *Werke*, 13:380.
90. *Werke*, 14:348, 15:306–7, 19:567.
91. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte 1822–3*, 12:459.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 359.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 356.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 358.
96. Naturally, debates concerning the extent Hegel could be seen to be a 'nationalist' would take up a book. Shlomo Avineri has written a strong essay against such nationalist readings—see his essay on "Hegel and Nationalism", in *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, ed. J. Stewart (Evanston: Northwestern Univer-

- sity Press, 1996), pp. 109–29. For a contrary example of quite a German-centred text, see Hegel's opening lecture "Hegels Anrede an Seine Zuhörer beim Eröffnung seiner Vorlesungen in Berlin am 22. Oktober 1818", in *Hegel*, ed. F. Heer (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1958), pp. 65–70.
97. Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, p. 440.
 98. Jag. Bibliothek 1828/9 Ms 83—cited in Stemmrich-Köhler, *Zur Funktion*, p. 187.
 99. Bernasconi, "Racial Basis", p. 171.
 100. Joseph McCarney, "Hegel's Racism: A Response to Bernasconi", *Radical Philosophy* 119 (May/June 2003): 1.
 101. *Werke*, 10:59.
 102. Bernasconi, "Racial Basis", p. 180.
 103. *Hegels Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes*, ed. M. J. Petry, II:59.
 104. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 105. *Werke*, 13:349.
 106. *Werke*, 12:122; *es ist nichts an das Menschliche Anklingende in diesem Charakter zu finden. Die weitläufigen Berichte der Missionare bestätigen dieses vollkommen, und nur der Mohammedanismus scheint das einzige zu sein, was die Neger noch einigermaßen der Bildung annähert. Die Mohammedaner verstehen es auch besser als die Europäer, ins Innere des Landes einzudringen. Diese Stufe der Kultur läßt sich dann auch näher in der Religion erkennen.*
 107. Tuska Benes, "Comparative Linguistics as Ethnology: In Search of Indo-Germans in Central Asia, 1770–1830", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no.2 (2004): 16.
 108. On p. 16—cited in Stemmrich-Köhler, *Zur Funktion*, pp. 194–95.
 109. On p. 55—cited in Stemmrich-Köhler, *Zur Funktion*, p. 195.
 110. Cited in Bernasconi, "Racial Basis", p. 182.
 111. *Werke*, 13:519.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. The *Arabian Nights* reference is found in S. S. Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 238; Urquhart's comment is in Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 150.
2. Marx, *The Eastern Question: A Reprint of Letters Written 1853–6 Dealing with the Events of the Crimean War*, ed. Edward and Eleanor Marx Aveling (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), pp. 4, 310—hereafter *Eastern Question*.
3. Paul Thomas, "Critical Reception: Marx Then and Now" in *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*, ed. T. Carver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 27.
4. Marx to Engels in letters of November 2, 1853 and March 18, 1857—found in *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1975) (hereafter MEGA), 3.7, p. 44; 3.8, pp. 86–87.
5. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Penguin Classics, 2002), pp. 219, 224.
6. For more on this, see David Norman Smith, "Accumulation and the Clash of Cultures: Marx's Ethnology in Context", *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 4 (2002): 73–83. Bryan S. Turner repeats Althusser's suggestion that we should discount Marx's earlier journalistic writings on colonialism in favour of his later, more mature scientific works—*Marx and the End of Orientalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), p. 5.
7. Letter to Engels, March 10, 1853—MEGA 3.6, p. 138.

8. *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Werke* (Berlin: Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus Beim ZK der SED, 1983), 34:525—hereafter *Werke*.
9. Ewa Borowska has examined Marx's changing attitudes towards Russia in "Marx and Russia", *Studies in East European Thought* 54 (2002): 87–103, where she discerns a progression from a period of emphatic hostility (1848–1870) to a later, more sympathetic approach, after being acquainted with Tsarist studies in economy sent to him by friends.
10. *Eastern Question*, p. 301.
11. December 30, 1853, *New York Tribune*, in *Eastern Question*, p. 188.
12. *New York Tribune*, April 7, 1853, in *Eastern Question*, p. 4.
13. *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on Colonialism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950), pp. 92, 227–29.
14. *Eastern Question*, p. 11.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 114; *The Karl Marx Library*, ed. Saul K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), 7:117.
16. *Eastern Question*, p. 21.
17. In a letter from Marx to Engels, September 12, 1863—in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works* (New York/London: International Publishers, 1975), 41:492.
18. *Eastern Question*, pp. 174, 269, 41.
19. Taken from "Einleitung zu den 'Grundrissen'", in MEGA 2.1, p. 33 (Akademie Verlag, 2006); *Collected Works*, 7:473, 8:214; *Eastern Question*, p. 319.
20. See Marx's approving citation of Mustoxidis in *New York Tribune*, January 6, 1859—in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on Colonialism*, p. 228.
21. MEGA 3.6, p. 174.
22. *The Karl Marx Library*, 4:32, 4:103.
23. *Eastern Question*, p. 3.
24. See August Nimtz, "The Eurocentric Marx and Engels and Other Related Myths", in *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus and Crystal Bartolovich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 68; K. B. Anderson, "Marx's Late Writings on Non-Western and Precapitalist Societies and Gender", *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 4 (2002): 85.
25. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 229–30, 236, 224.
26. Marx to Engels, Algiers, April 8, 1882—in Marx, *The Letters of Karl Marx: Selected and Translated with Explanatory Notes*, ed. Saul K. Padover (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 370.
27. Marx to Laura Lafargue, April 13, 1882—in Marx, *Letters*, p. 373.
28. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 155.
29. *Eastern Question*, p. 188.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 195.
31. Marx to Engels, March 10, 1853—in MEGA 3.6, p. 137.
32. *Eastern Question*, p. 26.
33. Cited in Berlin, *Marx*, p. 159.
34. *Eastern Question*, p. 20.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
36. *The Karl Marx Library*, 7:117.
37. Marx to Engels, March 10, 1853—in MEGA 3.6, p. 137.
38. Taken from the *German Ideology* in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1969), Band 3:427.
39. Engels to Marx, June 6, 1853—in MEGA 3.6, p. 190.
40. Taken from "Ein Komplott gegen die Internationale Arbeiterassoziation", in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke*, Band 18, 5, p. 446; *Eastern Question*, p. 20.

41. *Eastern Question*, p. 129.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
43. Marx to Engels, January 11, 1868—in *Collected Works*, 42:520; *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke*, Band 14, 4, Auflage 1972, p. 522.
44. *Eastern Question*, pp. 41, 269—the remark is attributed to Lucas Notaras.
45. Cited in David McLellan, *Karl Marx: A Biography* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 103—from “Paris Manuscripts”.
46. L. Krader, *The Ethnographical Notebooks of Karl Marx* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972), p. 284.
47. Marx to Engels, June 2, 1853—in MEGA 3.6, p. 180.
48. See M. Foucault, *Dits et écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), III:686. For an interesting examination of Marx’s ‘necromantic’ relationship to history—indeed, a reflection on the whole notion of the place of the dead within Marxism—see Mark Neocleous’s “Let the Dead Bury the Dead: Marxism and the Politics of Redemption”, *Radical Philosophy* 128 (2004): 23–32.
49. Marx, *Letters*, p. 372.
50. Marx to Liebknecht, February 4, 1878—in *Werke*, 34:317–18.
51. Reference to Bem in *The Karl Marx Library*, 7:333; Marx to Engels, May 3, 1854 in MEGA 3.7, p. 101.
52. Marx to Engels, May 3, 1854—found in MEGA 3.7, p. 101.
53. Marx, *Letters*, p. 365.
54. Cited in Praver, *Karl Marx and World Literature*, p. 238.
55. *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on Colonialism*, p. 74.
56. Taken from “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law” (1844), in *Karl Marx: A Reader*, ed. J. Elster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 301.
57. Taken from “Komplott”, in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke*, Band 18, 5s p. 445; reference to Daumer from “Rezensionen aus der Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung. Politischökonomische Revue. Zweites Heft, Februar 1850”, in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke*, Band 7, 5. Auflage 1973, p. 200.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
59. Marx, *Letters*, 376–77.
60. *Rheinische Zeitung*, January 13, 1843—in *The Karl Marx Library*, 5:31.
61. *Eastern Question*, p. 419.
62. *Eastern Question*, p. 53; Marx, *Letters*, p. 373.
63. *Collected Works*, 1:170.
64. Marx had originally wanted to call his tract against the propagandist Vogt ‘Da Da’, named after the Arab independence writer who circulated anti-colonial tracts against the French with the unknowing support of Napoleon III. See section VIII “Da Da Vogt und seine Studien”, in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke*, Band 14, 4. Auflage 1972.
65. *Communist Manifesto*, p. 241.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Cited in R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 39.
2. Roy Jackson’s *Nietzsche and Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007) has only just appeared, and deals with the implications of Nietzsche’s thought for Islam, rather than what Nietzsche had to say about the faith.
3. *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (London: Weidenfeld, 1967), p. 145.
4. Nietzsche’s use of both these titles is examined more fully in Andrea Orsucci’s excellent *Orient-Okzident: Nietzsche’s Versuch einer Loslösung vom europäischen Weltbild* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996).

5. For a fuller list of the books Nietzsche read in his days at Basel, see Luca Crescenzi's "Verzeichnis der von Nietzsche aus der Universitätsbibliothek in Basel entliehenen Bücher", *Nietzsche Studien* 23 (1994): 388–443.
6. Letter to Paul Deussen, January 3, 1888.
7. *Fragen Sie meinen alten Kameraden Gersdorff, ob er Lust habe, mit mir auf ein bis zwei Jahre nach Tunis zu gehen . . . Ich will unter Muselmännern eine gute Zeit leben, und zwar dort, wo ihr Glaube jetzt am strengsten ist: so wird sich wohl mein Urtheil und mein Auge für alles Europäische schärfen*—taken from a letter to Köselitz, March 13, 1881—found in G. Colli and M. Montinari, eds., *Briefe* (Berlin, 1975), III:1, S.68—cited in Orsucci, *Orient-Okzident*, p. viii.
8. See Graham Parkes's "Nietzsche and East Asian Thought", in *Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. B. Magnus and K.M. Higgins (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 379.
9. *The Antichrist*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 198.
10. *Alles, was deutsch ist, ist mir zuwider . . . Alles Deutsche wirkt auf mich wie ein Brechpulver*—taken from a letter to Christian Sethe, April 1822—cited in Christiane Barbara Pfeifer, *Heine und der Islamische Orient* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990), p. 4.
11. *Eigentlich bin ich auch kein Deutscher, wie Du wohl weisst . . . Ich würde mir auch nichts darauf einbilden, wenn ich ein Deutscher wäre. O ce sont des barbares! Es gibt nur drei gebildete, zivilisierte Völker: die Franzosen, die Chinesen und die Perser. Ich bin stolz darauf, ein Perser zu sein*—taken from a letter to Moser, January 21, 1824—cited in Pfeifer, *ibid.*, p. 6.
12. Nietzsche declares Goethe and Heine to be his two favourite poets in a late fragment—see the *Gesamtausgabe*, VII.34, June 1885, no. 10210.
13. *The Antichrist*, p. 196.
14. *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 26, p. 48.
15. *Ibid.*, section 30, p. 30.
16. *Auf dem Grunde aller dieser vornehmen Rassen ist das Raubthier . . . römischer, arabischer, germanischer, japanesischer Adel, homerische Helden, skandinavische Wikinger—in diesem Bedürfniss sind sie all gleich*—taken from *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, I.11, p. 31.
17. See *The Will To Power*, II.191, p. 113: "The profound and contemptible mendaciousness of Christianity in Europe—we really are becoming the contempt of Arabs, Hindus, Chinese."
18. William Robertson Smith, for example, whose trip to the Hejaz in 1880 produced the conclusion that "the barbarous and obsolete ideas of the Arab . . . have their roots in a consensus which lies deeper than his belief in Islam" (*Lectures and Essays*, p. 412—cited in Said, *Orientalism*, p. 236). Neither should we forget Schopenhauer's remark in the *Prologomena* that "Islam ist der Zivilisation nicht guenstig" (II.424).
19. Aphorism 12814—from the *Gesamtausgabe*, VIII: 2.352, own translation.
20. *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 238, p. 126.
21. *Will to Power*, section 145, p. 93.
22. *Schlachtgemeinschaft ist noch im Islam Sakralgemeinschaft: wer an unserem Gottesdienst theilnimmt und unserer Schlachtfleisch isst, der ist ein Muslim*—taken from the *Gesamtausgabe*, Aphorism no 11654—Autumn 1887, own translation.
23. See *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1974), p. 283, "Live in conflict with your equals and with yourselves!" Or the famous words from *Zarathustra*: "it is the good war that hallows every cause", Part I, p. 10.
24. *Als die christlichen Kreuzfahrer im Orient auf jenen unbesiegbaren Assassinen-Orden stiessen, jenen Freigeister-Orden par excellence, dessen unterste*

- Grade in einem Gerhorsame lebten, wie einen gleichen kein Mönchsorden erreicht hat*—taken from *Genealogie der Moral*, III.24, p. 152. Nietzsche probably obtained his knowledge of the Assassins from the Austrian translator of Hafiz, Joseph von Hammer, who had published his *History of the Assassins* in 1818. For more on the history of Western responses to this esoteric warrior sect, see Bernard Lewis's *The Assassins* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1968).
25. *sind noch lange keine freien Geister . . . denn sie glauben noch an die Wahrheit*—taken from *The Gay Science*, I.43, p. 109.
 26. See Orsucci, *Orient-Okzident*, p. 201.
 27. *Zur Genealogie*, III.24.
 28. *The Antichrist*, p. 196.
 29. *Ibid.*, s.59.
 30. *The Will to Power*, p. 145.
 31. Siegfried Mandel, *Nietzsche and the Jews* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), p. 324.
 32. *Die Menschen werden je nach ihrer Heimat Protestanten Katholikern Türken, wie einer, der in einem Weinlande geboren wird, ein Weintrinker wird*—Aphorism no. 2718—October 1876.
 33. *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 20, p. 20.
 34. *The Will to Power*, IV:940, p. 495.
 35. *Ibid.*, II:195, p. 115.
 36. *The Gay Science*, III:128, p. 185.
 37. *The Will to Power*, II:143, p. 92.
 38. *The Antichrist*, section 42, p. 167.
 39. Orsucci, *Orient-Okzident*, p. 339.
 40. . . .*was Wunders, dass er [Plato]—der, wie er selber sagt, den 'politischen Trieb' im Leibe hatte—dreimal ein Versuch im Sicilien gemacht hat, wo sich damals gerade ein gesamtgriechischer Mittelmeer-Staat vorzubereiten schien? In ihm und mit seiner Hülfe gedachte Plato für alle Griechen das zu thun, was Muhammed später für seine Araber that: die grossen und kleinen Bräuche und namentlich die tägliche Lebensweise von Jedermann festzusetzen. . . . Ein paar Zufälle weniger und ein paar andere Zufälle mehr—und die Welt hätte die Platonisirung des europäischen Südens erlebt*—taken from the *Gesamtausgabe*, V:1.296.
 41. "Voltaire, als er Mahomet missverstanden, ist in der Bahn gegen die hoeheren Naturen"—from Aphorism no. 8925, *Gesamtausgabe*, VII:2.60.
 42. *Ibid.*, V.2.347.
 43. *The Antichrist*, section 55, p. 187.
 44. *The Will to Power*, p. 445.
 45. *Ibid.*
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 446.
 47. *The Antichrist*, p. 60.
 48. See *Morgenröte*, V:549.

NOTES TO THE CONCLUSION

1. Andrea Polaschegg, *Der andere Orientalismus: regeln deutsch-morgenlaendische Imagination im 19te Jahrhundert* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), p. 5.
2. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). See the introduction to Amit Chaudhuri, ed., *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature* (London: Picador, 2001).

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